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ART. I. — *An Oration delivered at the Celebration in Philadelphia of the 106th Anniversary of the Birthday of THOMAS PAINE ; by JOHN ALBERGER. Philadelphia. 1843.*

To dig from an almost forgotten grave the intellectual character of Thomas Paine, the object of violent obloquy during life, and of contumely after death, may not be without its uses in these our times. It may be done now without offence ; it may be done, we think, without injustice ; without offence, — for we are not aware of the existence of any man, woman, or child, any men or set of men, whom criticism on such a theme can wound. Many a teacher of pernicious doctrine has, by the purity of his domestic and social relations, left behind him a sort of protective character. There are surviving relatives and friends, or those who know surviving relatives and friends, who disarm even just criticism, and, standing around the grave, claim pity for themselves, if not for the poor inhabitants below. But Paine had none of these. He was childless, and friendless. Nor is there a human being in this wide world, we verily believe, who cares a jot for him or his memory. There was, perhaps, to use one of his own phrases, something like “ sentimental union ” between him and the sparse congregation of freethinkers who looked to him in life as an oracle. But it was a “ sentimental union ” in its strictest sense. There were a few, who, when he died, regarded him as a sort of

martyr. But the affection or sympathy of such a class scarcely deserves the name. The heart where it dwells is hard and bony. It has no play, no warm life-spring. There is, in pathological phrase, with such folks, a perpetual determination of blood to the *head*, leaving the sources of feeling and true sentiment dry. No offence, therefore, can be given, even by harsh criticism, if it be deserved.

It may be done, too, without injustice. The time has long since gone by, when the name of Paine would throw good and pious men into paroxysms of indignation. No one nowadays reads "The Age of Reason," such is the entire and contemptuous oblivion into which it has fallen ; nor would any one take the trouble to mutilate a copy of Paine's Works, as was once the fashion, by cutting out his pages of loathsome infidelity. Revealed religion has too firm a hold on the mind of this age to be weakened by such cavils as Paine's, or to be strengthened by the answers of his adversaries. The Christian's faith has truly begun to be "something far higher, something that lies far deeper, than any mere act of the understanding" ; and that something is too secure to be enfeebled or wounded by sneering sophistry, or much invigorated by logical processes. If Paine, or any other infidel, rendered, in any mode or to any extent, service to the cause of liberty or morality, if any one of his fugitive essays, at the time of its publication, made the pulse of patriotism beat more quickly, or awakened any slumbering sense of public duty, there is now no such blinding prejudice as to make us reluctant to admit our obligation, be it what it may, to its full extent. His character may, therefore, be treated with entire impartiality ; we repeat it, without offence and without injustice.

And what a strange and eventful career was his ! As a little incident of history, how much varying interest was crowded into his life ! All climes, regions, habits, and institutions were Paine's by adoption ; and yet, such was the strange uncongeniality of his temper, with none did he seem to claim communion. He was a citizen of the world, and, of course, alien to every part of it. Born in Great Britain, he was an exile, and, literally and technically, an outlaw ; naturalized in America, he renounced her moderate republicanism for the exaggerations of French democracy ; a citizen of France, one of her august Counsellors, he be-

came *ex officio* an inmate of the *Conciergerie*, and was glad, not grateful, to escape with his head upon his shoulders ; buried in an American village, the grave, usually a quiet home, was violated, and the bones of the restless cosmopolite were exhumed and carried abroad, in solemn mockery of the relics of holy men of old.

In respect to America, we have a right to cause her share in this fluctuating property to be accurately defined ; and one object we now have in view is, without at all derogating from the actual value of Paine's services during the Revolution, to mark their worth very precisely, and to correct a prevalent notion, which in life he was anxious to cultivate, that he was by common consent regarded as a great benefactor to America, and that, as connected with our Revolutionary history, we Americans entertain cordial feelings towards him. There is now before us a letter from Paine, written on his return to America, in 1802, and republished in a British periodical, in which this absurd specimen of self-glorification is contained. " I arrived at Baltimore on the 30th of October, and you can have no idea of the agitation which my arrival occasioned. From New Hampshire to Georgia, (an extent of fifteen hundred miles,) every newspaper was filled with applause or abuse."

There are those living who remember " the agitation " of that day, and we shall have occasion hereafter to recur to the circumstances of his return to America, and to see what contemptible exaggeration of his own importance those lines embody. The truth is, that Paine came back a poor pensioner of party, an outcast from abroad, an illegitimate Jacobin, and assumed the congenial trust of a contributor to a ribald press, for which office — and those who employed him knew his qualifications — he was admirably fitted. Yet we doubt not that there are those abroad, and at home too, who may be deceived by such pompous mendacity as this, and may be led to believe that Paine really was one of the great men of the Revolution, and that when, in old age, he returned to the land which, in early life, he had, in a very limited measure, benefited, the public voice spoke cordial welcome, and the popular mind was moved to ecstatic gratitude. There are those, too, who may be very willing to believe, that the American canon admits such saints, and that Paine, the infidel, the scoffer, the libertine, the drunkard, and,

worse than all perhaps in anti-republican judgment, the stay-maker, was just the man for our savage, vulgar democracy to be proud of. Far, very far, is this from the truth.

It has always been with us matter of grateful wonder, that the American Revolution was so little contaminated by the coöperation of unworthy men, and especially of unworthy foreigners. It was a great popular movement, which attracted attention and awakened sympathy throughout the civilized world. A continent in arms against oppression was an imposing and attractive spectacle. The oppressor, too, was England, towards whom Continental Europe bore no love, and from whose government and ministry many Englishmen were alienated. There were, in a revolution, new avenues to honor and emolument, which one might naturally suppose would soon be crowded from abroad. Yet how few came hither, and, with the exception of French military adventurers, how exclusively were the ranks of our armies and the halls of our councils filled with those who were born on the soil, or who were domiciled here before the war began ! There was, in truth, as we perceive when we come to look more closely, a reason why sympathy from abroad, otherwise so natural, in this case met with some check. The Revolution, dating its commencement long prior to actual hostilities, was very gradual. From 1763 to 1774, it was a matter of grave, deliberative remonstrance and reasoning. There were professions of loyalty, — not such as the Scotch Covenanters and the Long Parliament made to Charles the First, with arms in their hands, ready and willing to seize what might not be conceded to them, — but professions earnest, sincere, and pacific, made by legislative assemblies and peaceful congresses, striving to convince Metropolitan authority, that its pretensions were unconstitutional. The Revolution was no affair of the barricades, of an infuriate, outraged populace rising suddenly to revenge. It was (thank Heaven !) no brigand revolt, no revolution of squatters, who, planting themselves on lands which belonged to others, raised the standard of rebellion, and solicited the kindred aid of all fugitives from justice throughout the world. What fellow-feeling could there be between an English radical, — assuming the breed to have been the same then as it is now, — a reviler of kings and queens, lords and ladies, *per se*, and any one of the leaders of our peaceful, deliberative

Revolution ? How dilatory would the process of revolt, as it was exhibited in this country, have seemed to the self-sufficient reviler of all established institutions ! How nauseous the professions of loyalty, which, till forbearance ceased to be a virtue, were sincerely uttered from the most patriotic lips ! Any one who will read Dr. Franklin's correspondence whilst in London, prior to 1774, will see how different his associates were, and how rarely he was approached by men of the stamp which we have referred to. The "friends of America," too, in Great Britain were not of the radical order, though the radical party, by virtue of its hostility to the minister, were so far friends of America. Lords Camden, Chatham, and Shelburne, the Marquis of Rockingham, the Duke of Richmond, Burke, Fox, and General Conway, were "friends of America," her advocates and steady defenders ; but it was oppressed, not revolutionary, America which they defended, and radicalism saw in their proceedings few inducements to sympathy.

In Continental Europe, there was of course no occasion for sympathy, till actual hostilities commenced ; and then the prevalent anxiety to serve America was, with one great exception, little else than a love of military adventure ; and the foreign officers who came hither were Dalgettys somewhat etherealized, in whom a love of adventure and a love of pay were strangely blended. Excepting this attraction, Anglo-Saxon, Puritan America not only had no bond of union with France, but there was a positive antipathy between the inhabitants of the two countries. We have heard it from the lips of a venerable survivor of those days, a Frenchman by birth and early education, who came to this country as a military adventurer in 1778, and who yet lives honored and beloved amongst us, that on his arrival in this country the greatest difficulty he encountered was the prejudice against his country and his language.* And it was very natural it should be so ; for the only civilized enemy Colonial America had ever known was France, and the bloody alliance of Montcalm and Dieskau with the savage frontier tribes was too recent to be forgotten. The difference of national religion was also operative. The love of

* We may be pardoned for naming the venerable Mr. Du Ponceau, of Philadelphia.

adventure conquered all these minor obstacles ; but national and natural sympathy, as we have shown, never did and never could exist, and the want of it was constantly felt. As early as May, 1777, Washington thus described the prevalent state of feeling on this point, in the army at least, and his language was, we imagine, a pretty faithful exponent of the feeling throughout the country. "These foreigners," says he, in a letter to Richard Henry Lee, "have no attachment nor ties to the country, further than interest binds them ; they have no influence, and are ignorant of the language they are to receive and give orders in ; consequently great trouble or much confusion must follow. But this is not the worst ; they have not the smallest chance to recruit others ; and our officers think it exceedingly hard, after they have toiled in this service, and probably sustained many losses, to have strangers put over them, whose merit perhaps is not equal to their own, but whose effrontery will take no denial."*

The truth is incontestable, and we mean only to state it, that the Revolution was *our own*, — and such is our pride in this distinction, that we sometimes feel a shade of regret, as a matter of historical association, at even the French alliance ; for we are confident that, although the contest would doubtless have been prolonged, and have been more sanguinary, had Rochambeau and his soldiers never landed on our shores, the result would have been the same, with no one to claim a share of the honor.

But to return to Paine, and his Revolutionary services, which it is almost absurd to mention in the same breath with the French alliance, and the aid actually rendered by the Frenchmen ; we repeat, that we choose to define accurately these relations, if it be only as a matter of historical curiosity.

Thomas Paine, the child of humble, though respectable parents, was born at Thetford, in the county of Norfolk, England, in the year 1737. His father was a member of the Society of Friends, and, it is believed, held steadfastly to the tenets and discipline of that exemplary sect. His mother was an Episcopalian. In this difference of opinion between his parents, some of his biographers have seen the cause of his early skepticism. The memorials of his early

* Sparks's *Washington*, Vol. IV. p. 424.

life are too few to enable either friends or enemies to form any satisfactory conjecture as to the source of his opinions, which, if we are to believe his own testimony, germinated early in his restless mind, and never left it during life. As a matter of mere feeling, we would gladly adopt the theory we have referred to ; for, as the experience and observation of all will show, hazardous in the extreme is the spiritual condition of that child, who, at the age of levity and thoughtlessness, sees no devotional concord in those to whom he looks for guidance, or hears nothing from their lips but the bitter words of that worst of domestic evils, family polemics. The cultivation of the devotional principle in the childish mind is the highest and most delicate trust a parent ought to know. It may be deadened by rigorous exaction, as we too often see in the children of the most pious. It may rot away by utter neglect, and for want of the fostering care which a judicious parent can alone bestow. But, more than this, it may, in the mysterious process of mental development, produce bitter and poisonous fruit, when it is tortured and perplexed by the differences of those who, in its culture, at least, should agree. Momentous indeed — let the example about to be illustrated enforce the precept — is the responsibility of parents thus situated !

Be the cause what it may, Paine was, according to his own story, an infidel in the nursery. We quote his own awful language, in which he records his recollections of boyhood.

“From the time I was capable of conceiving an idea and acting upon it by reflection, I either doubted the truth of the Christian system, or thought it to be a strange affair. I scarcely knew which it was, but I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine who was a great devotee of the Church. After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and, as I was going down the garden steps, (for I perfectly recollect the spot,) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself it was making Almighty God act like a passionate man, that killed his son when he could not revenge himself any other way ; and, as I was sure a man would be hanged that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had any thing in it of childish levity. It was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had that God was too good to do such an action, and

also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner to this moment; and I moreover believe that any system of religion, that has any thing in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system.”—*Age of Reason*.

And what a dismal retrospect is this ! The old man of sixty — for such he was when these sad words were written — travelling back in memory to the hours of infancy, and persuading himself that, at the age of seven years, he was a reasoning infidel ! The boy standing upon the garden steps, with the flowers and the singing birds around him, with the sound of familiar prayer in his ears, “ seriously reflecting ” on thoughts of blasphemy ! And fifty years afterwards, the childless, friendless man, who never knew the softening influence of domestic relations, amid scenes of blood and carnage at which even his heart, cold as it was, must have sickened, — for he wrote his “ *Age of Reason* ” in Paris, in the midst of the Reign of Terror, with overpowering proofs of man’s depravity before his eyes, — boastfully recording his persevering, obdurate skepticism of all in God’s written word, which could not be compassed either by his childish or his matured intelligence ! The story of Brutus immolating his children at the shrine of patriotism, and looking on with calmness as the axe of the Republic shed their blood, was a tale of classic verity, and involved no mystery to his illuminated mind. Man’s severe justice and man’s bloody atonement were easily comprehended. But all that God mysteriously ordained, and all that God’s Son was ready to undergo, the incarnation of his spirit, and the self-sacrifice of the mortal frame in which it was incarnate, amid the scoffs and gibes of railing infidels, was scornfully denied as false, because incomprehensible to one who was hourly beholding what to us seems the greater mystery of the forbearance of Omnipotence towards the bloody butchers of revolutionary Paris, Paine’s friends and fellow-laborers, and fellow-infidels. To us it seems to be a libel on childhood to assert such precocious blasphemy ; but if it be not, and Paine the old man told the truth of Paine the boy, then is it no exception to the fact proclaimed by the poet, that the child was father of the man ; and the brazen links of infidelity which bound his years together were never disunited.

Paine’s life, till he attained the age of thirty-seven, had no

other variety than a constant succession of occupations gave it. A journeyman and master stay-maker, a privateersman, a store-keeper, a tobacconist, a schoolmaster, and an excise-man, to no pursuit was he able or willing steadily and industriously to adhere. In his official career, of whatever kind, he was singularly unfortunate, both before and after his emigration; for while in America, as will be seen, he forfeited the confidence or incurred the displeasure of his Republican employers, in England he was twice, for some unexplained reason, dismissed from the Excise. To do Paine justice, however, we are free to admit, without attributing to him any actual official delinquency, that the Excise may easily be supposed to have been an uncongenial pursuit for one who could set no example of self-denial to deter violators of such laws, and whose tendencies were to sympathize with those whom its oppressions and restrictions most directly affected. When poor Burns took refuge in the Excise, he described it as an occupation in which honesty was a rare quality. "For the ignominy of the profession," says he, writing to his friend Mr. Ainslie, "I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting sergeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable audience in the streets of Kilmarnock; 'Gentlemen, for your further and better encouragement, I can assure you, that our regiment is the most blackguard corps under the crown, and consequently, with us, an honest fellow has the surest chance of preferment.'" Paine and Burns, we have a right to assume, were not exactly the men to withstand temptation in such a course of life; and it is at least within the range of reasonable probability, that other causes, besides the vindictive antipathy of the government to a pair of democratic gaugers, may have led to their dismissal from public service.

In his domestic life, Paine was liable to darker and more reasonable suspicions. Twice married, whilst in Great Britain, his first wife died within a year after marriage, and from his second, Frances Ollive, an exemplary and religious woman, he was in a short time separated. Without speculating on minute causes, or even asserting a truth which all observation authorizes, that, when man and wife without any assigned cause separate, the fault is with the husband, it is enough to know that there was a strange uncongeniality in Paine's temper, which denied him all affectionate commun-

ion with persons of either sex ; and we can easily imagine, without supposing that immorality was the source of difficulty, how dissonant and ill assorted that union must have been, where the wife's humble, though perhaps ascetic, piety was placed in daily contrast with the husband's scoffing, intolerant infidelity. He never married again ; his old age was that of desolate, childless solitude.

In 1774, Paine emigrated to America. His friends and admirers have assumed, that it was Paine's sympathy with a struggling and oppressed people which led to this step, and have asserted that Dr. Franklin's countenance was given as to one who had already attracted attention as a writer, and who, he thought, might aid the cause of freedom with his pen. To us it seems far more probable, that he emigrated to America as many clever foreigners now daily do, because he was out of employment at home, and it is very absurd to dignify the act with any higher motives. Paine had written a pamphlet on the Excise System, and a few newspaper squibs in poetry and prose, but had done nothing to attract attention or acquire reputation as a writer ; and Franklin's brief and characteristically cautious letter, in which he introduced him to his son-in-law, Mr. Bache, shows that no very exalted expectations were entertained by him of the abilities or usefulness of the stranger.

“ London, 30 September, 1774.

“ DEAR SON,
“ The bearer, Mr. Thomas Paine, is very well recommended to me as an ingenious, worthy young man. He goes to Pennsylvania with a view of settling there. I request you to give him your best advice and countenance, as he is quite a stranger there. If you can put him in a way of obtaining employment as a clerk or assistant surveyor, (of all which I think him very capable,) so that he may procure a subsistence, at least, till he can make acquaintance and obtain a knowledge of the country, you will do well, and much oblige your affectionate father,

“ B. FRANKLIN.”

In the autumn or winter of 1774, Paine arrived at Philadelphia, where, it seems, he contemplated the establishment of a female seminary. Being led accidentally to form a union with the proprietor of a periodical publication, which had just been commenced, he relinquished this design, and became, in a small way, a regular contributor to the press.

We learn these facts from the first, if not the only authentic account of Paine's early career in America, contained in a letter written, in 1809, by Dr. Rush to Cheetham, then about to publish a biography of Paine. His contributions in poetry and prose to the magazine are said to have been very popular, though, from the specimens which have survived, and those, too, the most extravagantly praised, we confess our utter inability to discover the merit which extorted such praise. Take, for example, the "Song," as it is called, on the "Death of Wolfe," in which a paltry conceit, of Jupiter snatching General Wolfe from earth to fight his battles against some celestial rebels, is rendered in tripping Bacchanalian metre, like the following, for example, — though we crave our readers' pardon for quoting such trash.

"The Sons of the East, the proud giants of old,
Have crept from their darksome abodes,
And this is the news, as in Heaven it was told,
They were marching to war on the Gods.
A council was held in the chambers of Jove,
And this was their final decree;
That Wolfe should be called to the army above,
And the charge was intrusted to me.
To the plains of Quebec with the orders I flew,
He begged for a moment's delay,
He cried, 'O, forbear! let me victory hear,
And then thy command I'll obey.'
With a darksome thick film I encompassed his eyes,
And bore him away in an urn;
Lest the fondness he bore to his own native shore
Should induce him again to return."

Dr. Rush must have been a better judge of pills than of poetry, if he sincerely praised such stuff as this. The reflections in prose on the death of Lord Clive are conceived and expressed with power, and occasionally with a coarse sort of eloquence. We refer to these two productions, because they are cited by his biographers as those which, by their peculiar merit, first attracted attention.

We come now to Paine's participation in revolutionary scenes. The history of the city of Philadelphia, then the colonial metropolis, faithfully written, during the year 1775, — or rather from the receipt of the news of the Boston Port Bill, in May, 1774, till the Declaration of Independ-

ence, — would be full of interest to the student of our history. The first and second Congress sat during that interval, and there was a curious action and reaction of political opinion in the city and the immediate neighbourhood, which might easily be traced. The population of Philadelphia, in political sentiment, was divided into a great variety of classes. The leaders of each were men of high merit and influence. Dickinson and Reed, Thomson, McKean, Morris, Clymer, Biddle, Mifflin, and others, were all active, and, though differing as to means and time, all influential with their respective friends in the popular ranks. There was, too, a loyalist party, led by Mr. Galloway, sustained by the whole proprietary interest, and strengthened by the peaceful principles and example of the society of Friends, who, openly and without reserve, almost without exception, individually and by accredited organs, deprecated all popular excitement, and exhorted an oppressed people to submit. The mantle of the first Proprietary, the friend of James the Second, had descended without a rent on the Quakers of 1775. The influence of such dissuasives was naturally great. When the interested dependent on proprietary or royal authority proclaimed obedience as his tenet, and submission as his rule of life, — when the importer of British goods, unwilling to lose the profits of trade, refused to consider commercial non-intercourse as a means of obtaining redress, — when the minister of the church, whose liturgy commemorated the 30th of January as the anniversary of a martyr's death, exhorted his flock to "submit to every ordinance of man," — it was easy to attribute other than pure motives to the utterance of opinion. But when the ancient, and venerable, and disinterested Friends, men of pure and unspotted lives, independent of all political association, as well of metropolitan as of colonial government, born on the soil, — whose ancestors had laid deep the foundations of all the institutions of charity and beneficence, in which the community had so much right to glory, and who themselves sustained them, — when such as these uttered earnest admonitions to peace and submission, no one could doubt the purity of their motives, nor was it easy to resist the power which their sincerity gave to all they uttered. We profess no concurrence with the doctrines promulgated by the Friends at the outbreak of the Revolution, but looking back on what they said and did as a mere mat-

ter of history, we are not disposed to question their honesty, or to denounce as traitorous their testimony to what they believed to be religious truth. Admitting freely this purity of intention, we can conceive how deeply such language as that in which, in 1775, the Quakers of Philadelphia addressed their brethren must have sunk into the public mind, and how materially their influence may have retarded the popular movement. "It hath ever been our judgment and principle, since we were called to profess the light of Christ Jesus, manifested in our consciences unto this day, that the setting up and putting down kings and governments is God's peculiar prerogative, for causes best known to himself; and that it is not our business to have any hand or contrivance therein; nor to be busy-bodies above our station, much less to plot and contrive the ruin or overturn of any of them; but to pray for the King, and safety of our nation, and good of all men; that we may live a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty, under the government which God is pleased to set over us." This is error, gross error of doctrine, but, in its unquestioned honesty, to many it seemed like truth, and had, more or less, the influence of truth. But on the other side was the whole body of the Presbyterians and Congregationalists, and their clergy, a body of men of high attainments and vigorous intellect, who, without exception, and with equal sincerity, were strenuous in promoting the popular excitement; who saw both their interest and duty in doing so, and looked to the dismemberment of the British empire by the independence of the colonies, as what they supposed would be a fatal blow to the British hierarchy.

In this scene of party strife and conflicting opinions, the Continental Congress, the Provincial Assembly, and the various revolutionary conventions met. And it was for a community thus agitated and excited, that Paine published his celebrated pamphlet, called "Common Sense." "It bursted from the press," says Dr. Rush, in his letter to Cheetham, "with an effect which has rarely been produced by types and paper in any age or country." Such is the testimony of Paine's friend and patron, after the lapse of more than thirty years, and we are not prepared, though marvelling somewhat at the hyperbolical form of the statement, to question its accuracy. It is very manifest, however, that the success

of the publication was mainly attributable to its being exceedingly well timed. That this was so, no one, we think, can dispute, who will at this day calmly and without prejudice read the pamphlet; and that even his contemporaries on the popular side thought so can easily be shown. In the "Memoirs of Bishop White" is the testimony of that venerable man, who, though one of the priests,* was true to his allegiance to our republican institutions. "Great Britain," says he, "threw us out of its protection, independently of all other measures, by what was called the Prohibitory Act, passed in November, 1775, authorizing the seizure of all vessels belonging to persons of this country, whether friends or foes. The act arrived about the time of the publication of Paine's 'Common Sense.' Had the act been contrived by some person in league with Paine, in order to give effect to his production, no expedient could have been more ingenious. To a reader of that flimsy work at the present day, the confessed effect of it at the time is a matter of surprise. Had it issued six months sooner, it would have excited no feeling except that of resentment against the author. But then had come a crisis, which the foremost leaders of American resistance were reluctant to realize to their minds."

Here the perplexity of the modern reader of Paine's ephemeral writings is truly stated. If "Common Sense" be judged by any ordinary standard of criticism, it is beneath praise; but if the reader will place himself in the relation to all those about him in which the readers of it in January, 1776, were, he can be made to understand the power and effect of this lucky pamphlet. The Colonies were made independent on the 19th of April, 1775, though they hardly knew it. Bunker Hill, Ticonderoga, Montreal, Quebec, had all been witnesses of daring independence and successful resistance. The people had been declared rebels, and put beyond the pale of the law, not, as Bishop White supposes, by an act of Parliament in November, but by the King's proclamation of the 23d of August, 1775, issued, to quote its own threatening language, "to bring to condign punishment the authors, perpetrators, and abet-

* Paine and his friends always made it a boast, that he was persecuted by the priests, meaning thereby the Christian clergy of all denominations.

tors of such traitorous designs." From June, 1775, Washington's rebel soldiers had kept all the colonial forces of the mother country within the lines of Boston, and were now about to witness their inglorious flight. The thought of independence was in the mind of every one who thought of the morrow; it was in the minds of all, either as matter of hope or fear. Months before "Common Sense" was dreamed of, a New England woman had written to her husband the words which once were thought so startling; "Let us separate; — what signifies a word?" And, besides all this, the public mind was agitated by the very suppression of these well ascertained opinions, — by councils held in secret because the issue was doubtful; and all the institutions of social life were looked to, as they must always be in an infant revolution, not as fabrics standing securely for protection, but as the possible means of destruction. It was the scene of the earthquake, when out of doors is safest. In Paine's own language,

" — without law, without government, without any other mode of power than what is founded on and granted by courtesy, held together by an unexampled concurrence of sentiment, which is nevertheless subject to change, and which every secret enemy is endeavouring to dissolve, — our present condition is legislation without law; wisdom without a plan; a constitution without a name; and, what is strangely astonishing, perfect independence contending for dependence. The instance is without a precedent; the case never existed before, and who can tell what may be the event? The property of no man is secure in the present unbraced state of things. The mind of the multitude is left at random, and, seeing no fixed object before them, they pursue such as fancy or opinion presents. Nothing is criminal; there is no such thing as treason; wherefore every one thinks himself at liberty to act as he pleases," &c.

In this state of anxiety, and apparent, rather than real, indecision, Paine's pamphlet appeared, — its pages boldly avowing the secret opinions of every thinking man, and proclaiming as desirable what all knew to be inevitable. There should be no wonder that its effects were apparently so great.

It is a pamphlet of not more than fifty pages, — brief enough to be widely circulated, and written in a style of homely eloquence suited to every comprehension. It is di-

vided into two parts, one an appeal to popular feeling against monarchical institutions all over the world, a diatribe against kings and queens and prelates ; the other, an argument in favor of independence, and of the ability and means of the Colonies to maintain a separate existence. There is in the former all the usual *slang* which can be uttered on such a theme, from which every reflecting mind in its sober moments revolts, though it is suited to the excited appetite of a revolutionary populace. It consists of reasoning from the elementary principles of society to its present complicated relations and condition, — the poor sophistry which, asserting the incontestable truth that all men are by nature free and equal, infers that there can be no state of society so artificial as to require distinctions of rank, and to need the control of what is known as absolute authority. The mind of the sober and reflective republican has no difficulty in seeing through this poor sophistry. For ourselves, without claiming any other merit than that of sincere and conscientious devotion to our popular institutions, we are not foolish enough to deny, that there may be, and are, states of society in which democratic institutions are impracticable, or, if practicable, would be pernicious. A Muscovite, an Austrian, or a Turkish republic, no one can be insane enough to believe in. There is not a nation of Continental Europe, except, perhaps, some few of the northern, Protestant states, in which, under existing circumstances, a representative democracy could survive the year of its creation. France is, in technical language, estopped by her own deeds. And even in England, where the principles on which representative government is founded are better understood, we may be permitted to doubt, reasoning from the past and the present, if such an experiment could succeed. There are many who think differently, and who will look frowningly on those who question the universal applicability of our theory of government ; but if they will look soberly on English society as it is now organized, its habitual consideration for rank and authority, its complicated mechanism, too firm and intricate to be easily disturbed, the dense population crowded into a territory too narrow to allow scope for the ceaseless activity of republicanism, — or if (and this is the most impressive consideration) they will study the history of England's great and ineffectual rebellion, when the wisest and purest

and ablest of her sons, — for such we honestly believe the leaders of the Long Parliament to have been, — stimulated by the highest impulses, were arrayed against a feeble, vacillating prince, and a treacherous nobility, and yet failed, signally failed, and were compelled, bowing their necks meekly, if not gladly, to submit themselves to the usurpation of a military adventurer, and to the worse domination of a restored king, the most contemptible and profligate man who ever sat upon a throne, — if this story be well read and considered, there will, we repeat, be room at least for doubt as to the fitness of such a nation, and a society so tempered, for popular institutions. Here, in Anglo-Saxon America, the experiment has been made, and has succeeded ; and, though a shade of doubt, a transient misgiving, may sometimes darken the minds of the most sanguine, yet it is too transient to disturb the tranquil and abiding confidence, that on this soil, and with a people educated politically as ours has been, representative republicanism is the best and only form of social institution that can exist or endure. It is, after all, — and to this point all fair reasoning brings us, — a matter of social aptitude ; and, freely conceding, as we do, that a popular government is the best and most natural, the most conformable to the word of God, proclaimed in his gospel, and written in the heart of intelligent man, we deny the logic which deduces from this admission the expediency of forcing, as Paine and his disciples would have done, all existing societies, no matter how organized, into this mould. Where *self* is fit for it, self-government is best. Hence is it, that we have no sympathy with the feeling, or agreement with the reasoning, which denounces all monarchy, *per se*, as detestable and unnatural.

Such, however, is the principle which the first part of “Common Sense” asserts, and asserts in the boldest manner. As a specimen of style and intelligible argument, let us take the following passage, in which we can readily imagine that the author spoke from his heart.

“England, since the Conquest, hath known some few good monarchs, but groaned beneath a much larger number of bad ones ; yet no man in his senses can say, that their claim under William the Conqueror is a very honorable one. A French bastard, landing with an armed banditti, and establishing himself King of England, against the consent of the natives, is, in plain

terms, a very paltry, rascally original. It certainly hath no divinity in it. However, it is needless to spend much time in exposing the folly of hereditary right ; if there are any so weak as to believe it, let them promiscuously worship the ass and the lion, and welcome. I shall neither copy their humility nor disturb their devotion.

“ Yet I should be glad to ask how they suppose kings came at first. The question admits but of three answers, namely, either by lot, by election, or by usurpation. If the first king was taken by lot, it establishes a precedent for the next, which excludes hereditary succession. Saul was by lot, yet the succession was not hereditary, neither does it appear from that transaction, that there was any intention it ever should. If the first king of any country was by election, that likewise establishes a precedent for the next ; for to say that the right of all future generations is taken away by the act of the first electors in their choice not only of a king, but of a family of kings for ever, hath no parallel in or out of Scripture, but the doctrine of original sin, which supposes the free-will of all men lost in Adam ; and from such comparison, and it will admit of no other, hereditary succession can derive no glory. For, as in Adam all sinned, and as in the first electors all men obeyed ; as in the one, all mankind were subjected to Satan, and in the other to sovereignty ; as our innocence was lost in the first, and our authority in the last ; and as both disable us from reassuming some former state and privilege ; it unanswerably follows, that original sin and hereditary succession are parallels. Dishonorable rank ! Inglorious connexion ! Yet the most subtle sophist cannot produce a juster simile.”*

May we not well wonder, that such trashy jargon as this could have made an impression on any mind, whether tranquil or excited ?

It is in that part of his pamphlet, in which, dismissing his speculations as to forms of government in the abstract, he urges on the American people the expediency and practicability of independence of Great Britain, that Paine rises to a far better tone and style. He appeals to the fresh recollection of the few years which had passed since the voice of colonial complaint was first raised, and holds up a record of oppressive acts by the mother country before the people.

* We have before us the edition of “ Common Sense ” published by Almon, in London, in 1776. The printer has discreetly left blanks in his pages, instead of printing such passages as might bring him within reach of “ an information *ex officio*.”

Stamp Taxes, Tea Duties, Navigation Acts, Orders in Council, Proclamations, the revival of old penal acts of Parliament, such as the statute of Henry the Eighth, by which offenders abroad were to be sent to England for trial, the very sight of which, like that of some rusty engine of torture brought to light from the cells of the Inquisition or the Bastile, struck terror everywhere, — all these are dwelt upon in eloquent gradation, and at last the climax is reached in the atrocity in the streets of Lexington, the ever memorable 19th of April, 1775. “No man,” says he, in eloquent, but ferocious language, “was a warmer wisher for a reconciliation than myself, before that fatal day ; but the moment the event was made known, I rejected the hardened, sullen-tempered Pharaoh of England for ever ; and disdain the wretch that, with the pretended title of Father of his People, can unfeelingly hear of their slaughter, and composedly sleep with their blood upon his soul.”

He dwells with earnestness on the resources, social and economical, which the Colonies had within themselves, and on which, developed as they would be in an independent state, they might so surely rely. He sketches a scheme of political organization for the infant community, and concludes with a passage full of sagacious forecast, and to the power of which we readily bear testimony. Let any one look about him now, in 1843, at the clouds which lower around the horizon, and the occasional flash and distant thunder that bursts from them, — the rivalry of States, sectional prejudices, and local intolerance, — and gratefully acknowledge, that it was the voice of wisdom that looked far into futurity, which bade them in infancy unite.

“Youth is the seed-time of good habits, as well in nations as in individuals. It might be difficult, if not impossible, to form the continent into one government half a century hence. The vast variety of interest, occasioned by an increase of trade and population, would create confusion. Colony would be against Colony. Each being able, might scorn the others’ assistance ; and, while the proud and foolish gloried in their little distinctions, the wise would lament that the union had not been formed before. Wherefore the present time is the true time for establishing it. The intimacy which is contracted in infancy, and the friendship which is formed in misfortune, are, of all others, the most lasting and unalterable. Our present union is marked

with both these characters; we are young, and we have been afflicted. Our concord hath withstood our troubles.”

We have incidentally referred to, without describing it, Paine’s scheme of a Constitution for the United Colonies. We notice it again as a new illustration of the impracticability of theoretical systems coined in any single mind; but also with a view to do justice, though perhaps it is quite unnecessary, to the reputation of an individual, whom Paine, in his latter years, took a malignant pleasure in reviling. In the year 1802, Paine returned from France, at the instance of Mr. Jefferson, in a national vessel, and paid his passage by writing for the Administration press abusive essays, which he dignified with the title of letters to the people of the United States. In a letter of the 19th of November, 1802, is the following passage.

“I have had my doubts of John Adams ever since the year 1776. In a conversation with me at that time, concerning the pamphlet, ‘Common Sense,’ he censured it, because it attacked the English form of government. John was for independence, because he expected to be made great by it; but it was not difficult to perceive, for the surliness of his temper makes him an awkward hypocrite, that his head was as full of kings, queens, and knaves, as a pack of cards. But John has lost deal.”

And then, in the same tone, he goes on to assert, by direct implication, that a conspiracy existed between General Washington and Mr. Adams, the first President and Vice-President, to make the Executive office hereditary, descending to Mr. Lund Washington, the President’s nephew, as next of kin, with a sort of contingent remainder to the heirs male of the Vice-President. Such was the incense which a vile party-press offered to its leader, and which his nostrils seemed gratefully to snuff up. We do not stop to nail down this malignant libel, but refer to it in connexion with another matter.

Among Mr. Adams’s familiar letters recently published, is one written in March, 1776, to his wife.

“You ask me what is thought of ‘Common Sense.’ Sensible men think there are some whims, some sophisms, some artful addresses to superstitious notions, some keen attempts upon the passions, in this pamphlet. But all agree there is a great deal of good sense, delivered in a clear, concise, and nervous style.

His sentiments of the abilities of America, and of the difficulty of a reconciliation with Great Britain are generally approved. But his notions and plans of Continental Government are not much applauded. *Indeed this writer has a better hand in pulling down than building.* It has been very generally propagated that I wrote this pamphlet. But although I could not have written anything in so manly and striking a style, I flatter myself I should have made a more respectable figure as an architect, if I had undertaken such a work. This writer seems to have very inadequate ideas of what is proper and necessary to be done in order to form Constitutions for single Colonies, as well as a great model of union for the whole."

Mr. Adams's "Frame of Government," as developed in his celebrated letter to Mr. Wythe, and Paine's, as stated in his "Common Sense," are both before us, and it may not be amiss to pause and see what sort of architects they were,—each in his own estimation being competent to the task.

Paine's plan was this. For each Colony, there was to be no other government but that of a Legislative Assembly annually elected, with a President as its only officer. Each Colony, the small and the large alike, was to choose thirty members of Congress. The President of Congress was to be chosen annually, and successively from the different Colonies. Three fifths were to form a majority. And this was to be the whole government of the States and of the Union; no other Executive, no Judiciary,—no authority but this single chamber for a Legislature, and an annual President. "He that could promote discord," says Paine, with admirable complacency, "in a government so equally formed as this, would have joined Lucifer in his revolt."

And then, after providing for a Continental written charter, to be framed by delegates to be chosen by Congress and the States,—thus reversing the natural order, whereby the government is organized after the Constitution, instead of preceding and creating the Constitution,—he concludes with a proposed ceremonial for promulgating this organic law, which has a most happy resemblance to the grotesque mummeries practised in revolutionary France.

"But where, say some, is the king of America? I'll tell you, friend; he reigns above, and doth not make havoc of mankind, like the royal brute of Britain. Yet, that we may not

appear to be defective, even in earthly honors, let a day be solemnly set apart for proclaiming the charter ; let it be brought forth, placed on the Divine Law, the word of God ; let a crown be placed thereon, by which the world may know that, so far as we approve of monarchy, in America the law is king. For as in absolute governments the king is law, so in free countries the law ought to be king, and there ought to be no other. But lest any ill use should afterwards arise, let the crown at the conclusion of the ceremony be demolished, and scattered among the people whose right it is."

Such was the Constitution and the form of publishing it recommended by "Common Sense" !

In January, 1776, before Paine's pamphlet was published, Mr. Adams prepared his "Thoughts on Government" for Mr. Wythe. They embodied the fruit of extensive study and deep meditation,—of full and philosophic observation of the existing state of the world, and rich recollections of the past ; but in practice, his scheme, thus elaborated in the closet, would have been found almost as objectionable as Paine's simple machinery. He repudiated earnestly the institution of a single Legislative Assembly, without restriction and control. The frame-work in each Colony was to be as follows, closely resembling the Constitution which in the same year Dr. Franklin prepared for Pennsylvania. There was to be a House of Representatives elected immediately by the people, which was to choose, either from its own body or from the people at large, a Council of twenty or thirty, who were to exercise a negative voice in the Legislature, but not to originate measures. The Governor was to be chosen annually, by a joint vote of the Representatives and Council, and to be an integral part of the Legislature, with an unqualified veto. All executive officers were to be chosen by the same joint ballot. The Judges (the Judiciary was a part of the scheme which Paine never thought of) were either to be nominated by the Governor to the Council, or elected by joint ballot. They were to hold their offices during good behaviour. The Continental Government was to be vested merely in Congress, whose authority was to be strictly confined to matters relating to war, trade, disputes between Colony and Colony, the Post-office, and the unappropriated crown lands.

How fortunate was it, that to no one man, either such as

Paine, a self-sufficient derider of experience, or as Mr. Adams, a learned and sagacious theorist, was the duty intrusted of framing a constitution for this nation ! From the time of John Locke downwards, the result in all such cases has been a failure. Equally fortunate is it, that the task was postponed till the work of violent revolution was accomplished, and the defects of the mere voluntary system were detected. Had a government been organized at the beginning of the war, we may infer from the schemes to which we have alluded, that the Federal principle would scarcely have been developed, but a loose, rickety system of Congressional domination would have been the only Continental authority or restraint. As it was, the Convention of 1787, guided by no constitution-monger, was composed of patriotic and practical men, who deliberated in a spirit of compromise and conciliation ; deliberated, too, with the lessons of disunion and disorganization, State contumacy and Continental imbecility, before them, and made a work so nearly perfect, that every amendment, so called, since made, has unquestionably marred its fair proportions.

Paine's biographers, Cheetham included, who certainly had no disposition to exaggerate his public services, have stated that, in the campaign of 1776, he joined the army as a volunteer. This may be so, and we incline to infer from the positive manner in which it is stated, that it was so ; but his military career was certainly brief, and gained for him no peculiar distinction. He was probably attached to the army in some civil capacity, and made himself useful as a writer of despatches and proclamations on a small scale.

The next, and no doubt the ablest, publication of Paine, was "The Crisis," a series of papers, sixteen in number, on the occurrences of the times, extending from December, 1776, to December, 1783, and designed as popular appeals to sustain the resolution of the nation during those scenes of trial. They bear the signature of "Common Sense." One criticism on these celebrated papers will at once suggest itself. On the face of them they appear to be hastily and carelessly written, with popular, *ad captandum* rhetoric, but without any thing like deep thought, or philosophical consideration. The two hundred pages of which they consist might be written, one would suppose, with a running pen, and could not have been revised or elaborated. Yet it is

curious to observe how much time was occupied in their composition. An average of three months was devoted to each paper; of course, Paine must either no longer be regarded as a ready writer, or some less creditable reason must be given for the sluggish and passive temper with which, patriot as he claimed to be, he regarded the stirring scenes around him. We have, however, a contemporary solution of this problem, which throws light on the personal habits of this strange and wayward being. There is a little volume of Revolutionary memoirs, now rarely met with, written by the late Judge Henry, of Pennsylvania, a man of education, intelligence, and patriotism. It comprises a journal of the campaign against Quebec, in 1775, in which the writer bore an honorable part, and a few memorials of a later period of his life. In 1777-8, when Congress was driven from Philadelphia, and Mr. Henry was a cripple from his wounds, received at the attack on Quebec, Paine became an inmate of his house at Lancaster. His habits of life and composition are thus described.

“When my wound,” says Mr. Henry, “in 1778, was so far mended that I could hobble upon crutches, or creep up stairs, (as you may have seen me of late years do,) my greatest recreation in my distressed state of mind, was, to get into the chamber of Mr. Rittenhouse, where the books were. There, his conversation, for he was most affable, enlivened my mind, and the books would so amuse it, that it became calm, and some desperate resolutions were dissolved. While that excellent man was employing his hours in the duties of his office, for the benefit of the people, Paine would be snoring away his precious time in his easy chair, regardless of those injunctions imposed upon him by Congress in relation to his political compositions. His remissness, indolence, or vacuity of thought caused great heart-burnings amongst our friends. I have heard the late George Bryan, then Vice-President of the Council, speak of his gross neglect with remarkable harshness. I would sometimes go into Paine’s room, and sit with him. His ‘Crisis,’ No. V., lay on his table; to-day three or four lines would be added; in the course of a week a dozen more, and so on. No. V. is dated March 21, 1778, but it was not published till some months after that date, and it was generally thought that it had been too long delayed. For my own part, I was so passionately engaged at heart in the principles of our cause, that Paine’s manner of living and acting gave me a high disgust towards him. No idea could enter my

mind, that any one in that noble struggle could be idle or disengaged."

Our limits are such as to prevent us from noticing these papers in detail, or from giving such extracts from them as would enable our readers to understand their scope and merit. Every student of our history, accurately appreciating their author's motives and opportunities, should carefully examine them. The first words of the first number, written two days before the battle of Trenton, have become part of our household words. "*These are the times which try men's souls.*" Yet it is very manifest, that, with all Paine's aptitude at coining popular phrases, there was no spring of true eloquence in him, and when he wrote under immediate and outward pressure, and without an opportunity of revision and slow elaboration, no matter how great the occasion or intense the excitement, he wrote feebly and impotently. Take, for example, the "Crisis," No. IV., and, meditating on the circumstances under which it was written, observe what a feeble appeal it makes to arouse a dismayed and discomfited people. It is dated at Philadelphia, on the 12th of September, 1777, the day after the battle of Brandywine, when the broken remains of the American army were slowly and sadly marching through the empty streets, reluctantly abandoning the capital of the nation to an invading foe. Within twenty miles of the field of bloody victory lay that invading force ready and, as was supposed, willing to advance and take possession of the city. The sound of the cannonade was in the ears of the people. Congress, remembering that, less than a year before, the Providence of God had snatched them from equal peril, remained firm and resolute. In December, 1776, they had fled in no groundless panic to Baltimore. In September, 1777, with a far greater danger impending, they remained firm and constant to their post and duty; nor was it till Washington supplicated them to leave the city, and Sir William Howe, driving our scattered levies before him, was actually surrounding Philadelphia, and cutting off all chances of escape, that they adjourned, first to Lancaster, and then to York. Yet at a juncture like this, when, if ever, eloquence was needed to drive despair from the popular mind, the style of Paine was dull and listless, and the two or three inanimate pages which he published could not have aroused hope or invigorated

patriotic feeling. It was the time to animate the nation with trumpet eloquence, not to tickle its ears with sneers and sarcastic ribaldry. But he was not the man for such occasions as these. His was the maudlin rhetoric, doled out, line by line, in the intervals of his after-dinner nap at Lancaster, when, with "a blanket wrapped round him, after eating an inordinate dinner," he snored away opportunities so precious. A nation's sorrows and a nation's terrors have consolations as well as those of individuals ; and never is confidence in a kind and merciful Providence more nobly developed, never is the voice of prayer more eloquent or impressive, than when an oppressed and injured people, deserted by all earthly auxiliaries, and bereft of all apparent aid, raises its voice to supplicate for assistance from on high. But it was not for such pick-lock eloquence as Paine's, to open sources of hope and consolation. The example of Washington, of him on whom, in times like these, the whole burden of responsibility and expectation was made to rest, of him who never murmured or repined, but who, without presumptuous confidence, never allowed despondency to weigh him down, — it was his example that had an influence in sustaining national hopes, when all the pamphlets that issued from a fertile press had failed to arouse them. The strong religious sentiment of the people, interwoven as it was with their political action, the sentiment of grateful and submissive trust in Heaven, which such men as Washington inculcated and exhibited, was a surer stay than ribald rhetoric could supply.

The winter of 1777–8 was, beyond comparison, the gloomiest period of the war, and it was at this time, that the "Crisis," No. V., to which Mr. Henry refers, appeared. It was the dark hour before day. Not only was the suffering of the army more severe than it had ever been, not only was the success of the enemy more apparent, as they remained in undisturbed possession of the two principal colonial cities, New York and Philadelphia, but, for the first time, the spirit of party cabal had insinuated itself into Congress, and, by attacking the person and character of the Commander-in-chief, made progress which seemed to threaten the good genius of the young Republic. It seemed as if removal from a city to the quiet seclusion of Little York had withdrawn all restraint, and given time and opportunity

for discontent and jealousy to develope themselves. Washington had been defeated at Brandywine, and had failed, by no fault of his, but still it was a failure, at Germantown. Philadelphia had been lost by the first defeat, and not recovered in consequence of the second. The Fabian system seemed to be at the lowest point of disrepute, while it so happened that at the same time, by one of those turns of luck which warfare often exhibits, the Northern Army under Gates had achieved a brilliant victory. Congress and many of the people could not, or would not, account for Gates's success and Washington's defeat, except by that charitable judgment which civilians are too apt to form of soldiers, that the general who is beaten must be in fault, and that it is genius that always succeeds. In this theory, General Gates triumphed, and enjoyed his triumph till the rout at Camden. That General Washington committed what may be regarded as military errors need not be denied ; but so have greater soldiers, from Marlborough to Soult. The campaign on Long Island, in 1776, may be considered one ; the affair of Fort Washington another. It is at least questionable, whether he was not wrong, and did not run a risk which no commander is justified in incurring, when he recrossed the Delaware the second time, after the battle of Trenton ; and possibly military criticism may detect an omission, in Washington's not crossing at Chad's Ford, and attacking Knyphausen, when he learned that Lord Cornwallis had passed the Brandywine above. But what of these ? or of what moment would it have been, if worse errors in a military point of view had been committed, so long as such a temper, such deliberative wisdom and undaunted moral resolution, as Washington's was in command ? Let those who weigh the skill of the tactician, to say nothing of those who would contrast the superficial talents of such men as Gates and Lee, with the wisdom, prudence, and self-control of him whose virtues have now survived all question, realize, if they can, the chances of the war, and of the peace which followed it, had the counsels of discontent prevailed in 1778, and Washington been superseded or dismissed to make room for the victor of Saratoga, the future fugitive from Camden.

The means adopted in and out of Congress to attain the object of this conspiracy were exactly such as unscrupulous men would most naturally resort to. Not only were the

minds of members of Congress poisoned by open representations to Washington's disadvantage, but the contemptible machinery of anonymous slander was put in active operation. A majority of what remained of Congress was no doubt hostile, and it was a matter of accident only that prevented this hostility from breaking out into some overt act of indignity. During all this time, Paine was in the employment of Congress, having been, in April, 1777, elected secretary to one of its committees, and he was in attendance on that body during its entire session at York. Yet, and it is due to him that it should be stated, he appears never to have lent himself to the purposes of the cabal, but on the contrary, in the fifth number of the "*Crisis*," written when the aspect of affairs was most gloomy, and Washington's enemies were most in the ascendant, he reviews the operations of the previous unfortunate campaigns in a spirit of patriotism and fairness, without a whisper of censure or reproach on him against whom more eminent men, his friends and employers, too, were then confederating. The infamy of that cabal will, at some future day, be fully illustrated. It is the darkest stain upon our history. It illustrates, better than any other incident, the variety of character on that scene, and affords evidence that there were agents at work in that hour of trial, of mean impulses and malignant passions, as well as others of disinterested and generous sentiments. But Washington was surrounded by a band of friends, whom calumny, whether open or concealed, could not alienate. When an anonymous writer wrote to Congress, that "the people of America have been guilty of idolatry, by making a man their God, and the God of Heaven and Earth will convince them, by woful experience, that he is only man; that no good can be expected from the army till Baal and his worshippers are banished from the camp," Mr. Laurens, then president, sent the letter at once to Washington, as the best means of marking his disapprobation of the mode of accusation and of the accusation itself. Nor was this all, (and we blush in dwelling on the cowardly meanness of these acts of social treason,) for within a week, another letter, apparently from the same source, was forwarded to Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia, urging him, almost in direct terms, to use his influence to dismiss from his high trust him of whom Virginia had so much reason to be proud. "The Northern

army has shown us what Americans are capable of doing with a General at their head. The spirit of the Southern," meaning that which was clustering with affectionate reverence around Washington at Valley Forge, "is in no way inferior to the spirit of the Northern. A Gates, a Lee, a Conway (!), would in a few weeks make them an irresistible body of men." "A great and good God," adds the writer, endorsing a sentiment of General Conway, "hath decreed America to be free, or the General and weak counsellors would have ruined her long ago." And then, with the true chivalry of an anonymous letter-writer, he thus concludes: "You may rest assured of each of the facts related in this letter. The author of it is one of your Philadelphia friends. A hint of his name, if found out by the hand-writing, must not be mentioned to your most intimate friend. Even the letter must be thrown into the fire. But *some of the contents ought to be made public* in order to awaken, enlighten, and alarm our country." But the "Philadelphia friend" mistook his man, when he made the generous, high-spirited Virginian the recipient of his secret slander, and hoped to make him the agent to scatter calumnies abroad which the author was afraid to endorse. "Believe me," said Henry, when sending this letter to the Commander-in-chief, "I have too high a sense of the obligations of America to you, to abet or countenance so unworthy a proceeding. While you face the armed enemies of our liberty in the field, and by the favor of God have been kept unhurt, I trust your country will never harbour in her bosom the miscreant who would ruin her best supporter. I wish not to flatter, but when arts unworthy honest men are used to defame and traduce you, I think it not amiss, but a duty, to assure you of the estimation in which the public hold you." The student of our history is aware, that Washington detected his anonymous assailant by the hand-writing, which he so much desired to conceal, and found him to be one who in public had always professed for him the greatest veneration and regard.* How profoundly grateful should we be, that such a conspiracy was frustrated—frustrated, too, by the manly candor of Washington's friends, and by his own resolute defiance of his enemies, secret and avowed!

* Sparks's *Washington*, Vol. V. p. 515.

Though in this attack on Washington Paine took no offensive part, but rather employed his pen in his defence, yet, at a later period of his life, he expressed his regret that he had not joined the cabal, and reproached Washington with ingratitude for forgetting his assistance. "Though I came forward," said he, in 1802, "in defence of Mr. Washington, when he was attacked, and made the best that could be made of a series of blunders that had nearly ruined the country, he left me to perish when I was in prison." It is in the same letter from which we make this extract, that Paine charged John Adams, towards whom his animosity never abated, with being an active participator, if not a leader, in the Conway cabal. On this charge we may be allowed to make a passing remark, — the more so, as the correspondence of Mr. Adams, recently published, seems to give some color to the accusation. But for this, Paine's attack, like the thousand venomous calumnies which were generated in the councils of the contending parties of that day, might be scornfully disregarded.

Mr. Adams left Congress very soon after it reassembled at York, in 1777. The germs of the hostile conspiracy were undoubtedly planted at that time, so far as it originated in mere restlessness at apparent military inactivity. The fall of Philadelphia seems to have aroused the resentment of Congress, and the victory at Saratoga was thought to justify it. In this feeling, to a certain extent, Mr. Adams may have shared. It extended to many who were Washington's warmest friends. In 1776, General Reed had complained of the military policy pursued. In the fall of 1777, General Wayne, in an unpublished letter to Gates, which now lies before us, complains of it still more bitterly. Yet Washington had no truer friends than these two gallant men, — none who did him more ample justice. It is therefore not so much to be wondered at, that a civilian, like Mr. Adams, a man of ardent temperament, should feel the same transient discontent and irritation. But it was transient, and it was not excessive. "Washington," said he in a letter to his wife, a day or two before the battle of Brandywine, "has a great body of militia assembled and assembling. Whether he will strike or not, I cannot say. He is very prudent, you know, and will not unnecessarily hazard his army. By my own enlivened feelings I judge I should put more to risk, if

I were in his shoes ; but perhaps he is right, — I am sick of Fabian systems in all quarters.” And so might many an irritable civilian or soldier write, when chafed not only by what seemed to him military inaction, but by the thousand crosses caused by such a body as Congress. But this was not all. Mr. Adams was a student, and had not studied vainly the pages of history. The evils of military domination, of the ascendancy of a military man, are taught on every page ; and it was an easy thing for precepts and speculative results like these to work injustice, and to be made the basis of a morbid apprehension and jealousy of the influence of a successful soldier. Nor was this feeling confined to his breast. It controlled Congress from first to last. Washington suffered under it throughout the war. Yet who shall say, reasoning from all history, that it was unnatural, or that, being natural, it was unreasonable ? It was under the influence of feelings thus produced, that Mr. Adams wrote to his wife the only lines which can be construed into disparagement of Washington. “Congress,” says he, “will appoint a thanksgiving ; and one cause of it ought to be, that the glory of turning the tide of arms is not immediately due to the Commander-in-chief, nor to Southern troops. If it had been, idolatry and adulation would have been unbounded ; so excessive as to endanger our liberties, for aught I know. Now, we can allow a certain citizen to be wise, virtuous, and good, without thinking him a Deity or a Saviour.” In a note, by Mr. C. F. Adams, to this passage, Dr. Rush’s testimony is quoted to a speech very much to the same effect, said to have been made in Congress on the 18th of February, 1777, on a resolution to give General Washington the selection of all his officers. We require, however, better proof than this. Dr. Rush was bitterly hostile to Washington, and was the reputed author of the anonymous letter to Patrick Henry. He was desirous of representing Mr. Adams as partaking of his embittered feeling. He speaks, too, of a resolution on which the speech was made, when from the Journal no such resolution appears ever to have been offered ; and, above all, he says that the speech was made on the day but one after Mr. Adams wrote to his wife in terms of earnest praise of the Commander-in-chief. But even attributing to him all that Dr. Rush says he uttered, it was little more than he had previously written, and there was nothing in it but the

expression of a mistaken, though not unreasonable, opinion. How different is this from a participation in the miserable intrigue, which, having its origin in the disappointment of a combination of foreign adventurers, such as Conway and his most confidential friends, arose altogether after Mr. Adams had left Congress and sailed for France, and was sustained by means from which every honorable mind revolts ! John Adams would have cut off his right hand rather than have written a word of anonymous calumny. There now lies before us a letter, which has never been published, written by Mr. Adams when at the Hague, in 1784, to an American friend in Europe, from which, in final refutation of this imputation of personal hostility to Washington, we make the following extract :

“ General Washington’s retreat is the completion of his character, the greatest our country ever produced. She will never want a greater : a succession of such will ensure her felicity and prosperity. May he live, and be again our great pillar, if we should have another war. But, my friend, is the next generation to produce such characters ? Are the moral sentiments and that education which produced such men to be preserved, or are they in danger ? Are the eyes of the people to be fixed, as they have been, on virtues, or on ribbons ? ”

About the time when these lines were written, Paine was beginning to repent his omission to unite with the secret cabal of 1778.

When Paine published his “ Age of Reason ” in Paris, he described himself on the title-page as “ Citizen and Cultivator of the United States of America ; — *Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Congress in the American Affairs*, and Author of the works entitled ‘ Common Sense ’ and ‘ Rights of Man.’ ” We have a word or two to say as to one of the titles here so boastfully displayed.

On the 17th of April, 1777, Paine was elected Secretary or Clerk to the Committee of Foreign Affairs, with a salary of seventy dollars a month, and continued in office till —, 1779, when, to avoid dismissal, he resigned. What his duties were does not appear. They were certainly neither very onerous nor responsible, and there is some reason in the suggestion of Judge Henry in his *Memoirs*, that the office was meant as a sinecure for one whose pen might be made useful

to Congress. The cause of his dismissal may be briefly stated, without the necessity of embarrassing ourselves with the perplexities in which, from extraneous considerations, it was once involved,—the endless controversies of Deane and Beaumarchais. When Paine was elected to office, he was required to take an oath, specially prescribed by Congress, “faithfully to execute the trust reposed on him according to his best skill and judgment, *and to disclose no matter, the knowledge of which shall be acquired in consequence of such his office, that he shall be directed to keep secret.*” Yet in the face of this obligation, Paine not only threw himself into a controversy with Silas Deane, with which, as an officer of Congress, he had no right to meddle, but paraded in the columns of the newspapers facts and the evidence of facts, “the knowledge of which he could only have acquired through his office.” The assertion of Paine was, that the assistance furnished to Mr. Deane through Beaumarchais was really furnished by the Court of Versailles, then at peace with Great Britain. Whether this were true or not, (and we presume no one now doubts that it was true,) it is entirely aside from the question as to Paine’s official delinquency. It was not only a most indecent breach of trust, but it was one that was necessarily followed by severe retribution. Yet he seems to have been entirely unconscious of this breach of duty, and, with a careless effrontery which it is scarcely possible to reconcile with the possession of reason, he exclaimed; “If Mr. Deane or any of his friends will take the trouble to come to my office, I will give him or them my attendance, and show them, in handwriting which Mr. Deane is well acquainted with, that the supplies he so pompously plumes himself upon were promised and engaged, and that as a present, before he even arrived in France,” &c. In his memorial to the legislature of New York in 1808, he says that the despatches from which he derived this information, being addressed to the Foreign Committee as confidential, were not even divulged to Congress, making the breach of faith on his part still more remarkable.

It is, indeed, impossible to avoid the suspicion, in examining this rather humiliating page of our history, that Paine must have been instigated to make this disclosure by those higher in authority, for some ulterior purpose. Yet it is difficult to conceive what object could have been contem-

plated, as the alliance with France was consummated, and a Continental war in progress. Be this, however, as it may, the consequences were such as might have been anticipated. The French Minister complained to Congress of the act of their subordinate, and demanded an authoritative disavowal of the assertions made by Paine. The disavowal was made, with what throes of conscience may now easily be conceived, and, after a vain struggle to delay action, Paine, to avoid dismissal, sent in his resignation, which was at once accepted. Any one who will take the trouble to examine the votes and proceedings on this subject, and read with every disposition to a charitable construction of his conduct, cannot fail to be struck with the silence of Paine and his apologists, both in and out of Congress, on what is, after all, the turning point of the case, — the violation of his oath of secrecy. That being admitted, as from this silence we may assume that it was, it is worse than idle to talk of the truth or falsehood of the secrets which were betrayed. It is no paradox to say, that his delinquency was greater, if what he divulged was the truth. From this time we must look upon Paine as a disgraced and degraded man.

Unable to find employment elsewhere, he became, the following year, clerk to the Assembly of the State of Pennsylvania, which post he retained till his departure for Europe in 1781. It was during this period, that Negro Slavery was abolished in Pennsylvania, and there is a tradition, (as such merely do we refer to it,) that the act of abolition, with its eloquent preamble, was written by Paine. We know not, and cannot now pause to inquire, on what testimony this tradition rests. So far as internal evidence goes, we should at once deny his claim to this high honor. There is a dignified eloquence in this celebrated preamble, an unaffectedly devout enunciation of religious sentiment, and a precise and unassuming form of expression, which we cannot attribute to Paine. Be this as it may, however, we will not wrest from Paine the distinction which even vague tradition gives him. Few of the States of this Union (we trust we shall not be called to order for the remark) can boast of two more honorable or more eloquent legislative acts than the Pennsylvania Abolition Act of 1780, and her unanimous instructions to her Representatives in Congress in favor of the Missouri restriction.

In February, 1781, Paine accompanied Colonel Laurens to France, whence they returned in the following August. Laurens went as the agent of Congress, to negotiate a loan, which he succeeded in effecting. In what capacity Paine went has never been precisely ascertained. His own statement was, that he went at the instance of Colonel Laurens. Certain it is, that he was clothed with no official authority. The following letter, written in the preceding year by Paine, may shed some light on the real object of his mission, if, indeed, it had any other than the one which was apparent, that of aiding and counselling Colonel Laurens. We the more readily insert it, as it has never before been in print, and is a production eminently characteristic of its self-complacent author.

“Sept. 9th, 1780.

“SIR ;

“Last spring I mentioned to you a wish I had to take a passage for Europe, and endeavour to get privately to England. You pointed out several difficulties in the way, respecting my own safety, which occasioned me to defer the matter at that time, in order not only to weigh it more seriously, but to submit it to the government of subsequent circumstances. I have frequently and carefully thought of it since, and, were I now to give an opinion on it as a measure in which I was not a party, it would be this ; — that as the press in that country is free and open, could a person possessed of a knowledge of America, and capable of fixing it in the minds of the people of England, go suddenly from this country to that, and keep himself concealed, he might, were he to manage his knowledge rightly, produce a more general disposition for peace than by any method I can suppose. I see my way so clearly before me in this opinion, that I must be more mistaken than I ever yet was on any political measure, if it fail of its end. I take it for granted, that the whole country, ministry, minority, and all, are tired of the war ; but the difficulty is how to get rid of it, or how they are to come down from the high ground they have taken, and accommodate their feelings to a treaty for peace. Such a change must be the effect either of necessity or choice. I think it will take, at least, three or four more campaigns to produce the former, and they are too wrong in their opinions of America to act from the latter. I imagine that next spring will begin with a new Parliament, which is so material a crisis in the politics of that country, that it ought to be attended to by this ; for, should it start wrong, we may look for-

ward to six or seven years' more war. The influence of the press, rightly managed, is important ; but we can derive no service in this line, because there is no person in England who knows enough of America to treat the subject properly. It was in a great measure owing to my bringing a knowledge of England with me to America, that I was enabled to enter deeper into politics, and with more success, than other people ; and whoever takes the matter up in England, must in like manner be possessed of a knowledge of America. I do not suppose that the acknowledgment of Independence is at this time a more unpopular doctrine in England, than the declaration of it was in America immediately before the publication of the pamphlet 'Common Sense,' and the ground appears to me as open for the one now as it did for the other then.

"The manner in which I would bring such a publication out would be under the cover of an Englishman who had made the tour of America *incog*. This will afford me all the foundation I wish for, and enable me to place matters before them in a light in which they have never yet viewed them. I observe that Mr. Rose, in his speech on Governor Pownall's bill, printed in Bradford's last paper, says, that 'to form an opinion on the propriety of yielding independence to America requires an accurate knowledge of the state of that country, the temper of the people, the resources of their Government,' &c. Now there is no other method to give this information a national currency but this,—the channel of the press, which I have ever considered as the tongue of the world, and which governs the sentiments of mankind more than any thing else that ever did or can exist.

"The simple point I mean to aim at is, to make the acknowledgment of Independence a popular subject, and that not by exposing or attacking their errors, but by stating its advantages and apologizing for their errors, by way of accommodating the measure to their pride. The present parties in that country will never bring one another to reason. They are heated with all the passion of opposition, and to rout the ministry, or to support them, makes their capital point. Were the same channel open to the ministry in this country which is open to us in that, they would stick at no expense to improve the opportunity. Men who are used to government know the weight and worth of the press, when in hands which can use it to advantage. Perhaps with me, a little degree of literary pride is connected with principle ; for, as I had a considerable share in promoting the declaration of Independence in this country, I likewise wish to be a means of promoting the acknowledgment of it in that ; and

were I not persuaded, that the measure I have proposed would be productive of much essential service, I would not hazard my own safety, as I have every thing to apprehend should I fall into their hands ; but, could I escape in safety, till I could get out a publication in England, my apprehensions would be over, because the manner in which I mean to treat the subject would procure me protection.

“ Having said thus much on the matter, I take the liberty of hinting to you a mode by which the expense may be defrayed without any new charge. Drop a delegate in Congress at the next election, and apply the pay to defray what I have proposed ; and the point then will be, whether you can possibly put any man into Congress who could render as much service in that station as in the one I have pointed out. When you have perused this, I should be glad of some conversation upon it, and will wait on you for that purpose at any hour you may appoint. I have changed my lodgings, and am now in Front Street, opposite the Coffee House, next door to Aitken’s bookstore.

“ I am, Sir, your ob’t, humble servant,

“ THOMAS PAINE.”

The special mission of Colonel Laurens to France, and the events which immediately followed his return, fill one of the most interesting chapters of our Revolutionary history. When he sailed, in the winter of 1781, affairs looked gloomy on this side of the Atlantic, even with all the encouragement of the new alliance, and the actual presence of a French fleet and army. The currency, by which alone the army was paid, was at its lowest point of depreciation. The confederation was incomplete, and made slow progress with Congress and the States. The French fleet was blockaded in Newport harbour, and the army lay in entire inaction, unwilling to leave the fleet defenceless. “ Send us,” says Rochambeau, in a letter to Count de Vergennes, with a vehemence that shows the depth of his anxiety, “ send us troops, ships, money ; but do not depend upon these people, nor upon their means ; they have neither money nor credit ; their means of resistance are only momentary, and called forth when they are attacked in their own homes. They then assemble for the moment of immediate danger and defend themselves. Washington commands sometimes fifteen thousand, sometimes three thousand.” Never did man assume a more painfully responsible trust than Colonel Laurens. Never did man more zealously labor

to discharge it. He had a personal feeling in his duty. Across the channel, in no formal duress, but literally in the cells of the Tower, his aged father, worn down with infirmity and sorrow, a venerable patriot whose gray hairs should have moved his inhuman jailors to pity, was incarcerated. Who knows what promises on this score were whispered into the ears of the young ambassador, to tempt him from his duty ? Yet so zealously was it discharged, so perseveringly did he haunt the French ministerial antechambers, so bluntly and honestly did he express his irritation and disappointment, that Vergennes made it the subject of formal complaint to his minister in America. And who can wonder at his importunity, on reading Washington's private letters to him ? "Be assured, dear Laurens, day does not follow night more certainly than it brings with it some additional proof of the impracticability of carrying on the war without the aids you were directed to solicit. As an honest and a candid man, as a man whose all depends on the final and happy termination of the present contest, I assert this ; while I give it decisively as my opinion, that, without a foreign loan, our present force, which is but the remnant of an army, cannot be kept together this campaign, much less will it be increased and in readiness for another. But why need I run into detail, when it may be declared in a word, that we are at the end of our tether, and that now or never our deliverance must come ? "

And between the date of this earnest letter, and Colonel Laurens's return in August, 1781, how much of momentous interest was crowded ! It is a story of romance. The semi-pursuit, semi-retreat, of the British through Virginia, till Lord Cornwallis found himself pent up on the peninsula of Yorktown, — the dispersion of the English fleet off Newport, and the first attempt of De Tilly and Destouches to make a diversion to the southward, — the drawn sea-fight with Arbuthnot, — the arrival of Du Barras with reinforcements at Boston, — the conference at Wethersfield, and the final plan of attack on New York, desperate as it may seem, by sea and land, — the night attack and repulse of the 2d of July, — the arrival of the Hessian reinforcements, — the abandonment of the plan against New York, — the news of the arrival of Count de Grasse, first in the West Indies, and then off the Capes of the Chesapeake, — the entire change

of the campaign from New York to Virginia, and the secret and well concerted movement of the allied armies from the Hudson to James River, — all this, with its momentous results, was crowded into a brief period ; and within three months after urging his request with such importunity at the Court of Versailles, Colonel Laurens was storming the British redoubts at Yorktown, while the flags of more than thirty French ships of the line floated in triumph on the waters of the Chesapeake.

“ We brought,” says Paine, in his usual strain of self-glorification, “ two millions and a half of silver, with clothes and military stores, which enabled our army to move to Yorktown to attack the British under Cornwallis. As I never had a cent for this service, I feel myself entitled, now the country is in a state of prosperity, to state the case to Congress” (*Memorial, in 1808, to Congress*). Had Paine been content with the honorable distinction of being, in his hour of disgrace, the companion of so pure a man as Laurens, no one would have been tempted to wrest it from him. But there is not a shadow of evidence that he either did render or could have rendered service at the Court of France. Laurens needed no other aid than what his own talents and the experience of Franklin gave him, and it would have been no slight diplomatic blunder to associate publicly in his mission a man who, not two years before, had been disgraced for offering a wilful and deliberate insult to the Court to which the mission was accredited.

Paine’s enemies, and Cheetham in particular, in their anxiety to depreciate his claims, have endeavoured to show that the aid obtained from France by Colonel Laurens had nothing to do with the success of the campaign of 1781, and have proved this to their own satisfaction by showing, what no one can dispute, that the movement against Cornwallis was planned and partially carried into effect before its arrival. On the 25th of August, when Laurens and Paine landed at Boston, the army had advanced to Philadelphia, though General Washington had not left his head-quarters on the North River, and on the 5th of September, though the news of their arrival had reached the army, no one yet knew what was their success. It was on that day, that Mr. Morris, at Washington’s urgent instance, made his private and ineffectual appeal to Count Rochambeau to lend him

twenty thousand hard dollars from his military chest, to advance a month's pay to the American troops. He followed the French general as far as Chester, such was his solicitude and the public necessity, and on his way thither received the glad tidings of the arrival of Count de Grasse in the Chesapeake. Such was the confidence inspired by this news, that Rochambeau at once made the advance, on Mr. Morris's promise to repay it on the first of October, which he was enabled to do through Colonel Laurens's supplies. With all this, Paine, however, had no more to do than the footman that brushed Colonel Laurens's coat.

With the surrender of Yorktown, the war of the Revolution may be said to have terminated. But when the excitement of actual warfare and impending danger was over, the vigor of the people seemed to sink at once, and the five or six years that ensued presented a dreary aspect to those who had fought the battles of their country well, had counselled her in hours of extremity, and now looked for their recompense to the consummation of the high hopes which they entertained from free institutions safely consolidated and established. Instead of this, there ensued fearful disorganization ; no union, no strength, no confidence, no currency, no means of public faith ; not merely "the loose buckling of the belt," (one of Paine's phrases,) but the danger of wild centrifugal action, which threatened, from mere want of ordinary resistance, to produce a desolation that war itself had failed to effect. Then it was that the genius of a great man developed itself, and Robert Morris, taking charge of what were called our Finances, empty vaults, dishonored credit, and a burden of foreign debt, labored, with mental powers almost superhuman, to lay a foundation on which something like system and order could be raised. In his Diary for February, 1782, Mr. Morris made the following note.

"Having lately had several meetings with Mr. Thomas Paine, the writer of a pamphlet styled 'Common Sense,' and many other well known political pieces, which, in the opinion of many respectable characters, have been of service to the cause of America, I thought this gentleman might become far more serviceable to the United States by being engaged to write in the public newspapers in support of the measures of Congress and their Ministers. My assistant, Mr. Gouverneur Morris, is clearly of

the same opinion, and, in all our conferences with him, we have pointedly declared, that we sought the aid of his pen only in support of upright measures and a faithful administration in the service of our country. We disclaim private or partial views, selfish schemes or plans of any and every kind. We wish to draw the resources and powers of the country into action. We wish to bring into the field an army equal to the object for which we are at war. We wish to feed, clothe, move, and pay the army as they ought to be done, but we wish also to effect these on such terms as may be least burdensome to the people, at the same time that the operations shall be every way effective. Having these for our objects, we want the aid of an able pen to urge them upon the legislatures of the several States."

This is the very guarded language of Mr. Morris, who evidently had no very exalted opinion of Paine's abilities as a writer, but rather deferred to the views of others who thought better of him than he did; and it is probable, reasoning from the evidence we have, that the attempt thus to employ his talents failed, since, except two brief numbers of the "*Crisis*," we are aware of no publication made by him at that time, or indeed at any time, on the subjects to which Mr. Morris refers in his diary. In one of his letters to the people, he alludes to something of the kind, and with his usual modesty claims for himself the suggestion of the Convention of 1787, and the great results which flowed from it.

"If," says he, "by Federalist is to be understood one who was for cementing the Union by a general government, operating equally over all the States, in all matters that embraced the common interests, and to which the authority of the States severally was not adequate, for no one State can make laws to bind another; if, I say, by a Federalist is meant a person of this description, (and this is the origin of the name,) I ought to stand first on the list of Federalists; for the proposition of establishing a general government over the Union came originally from me, in 1783, in a written memorial to Chancellor Livingston, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs to Congress, Robert Morris, Minister of Finance, and his associate, Gouverneur Morris, all of whom are now living, and we had a dinner and conference at Robert Morris's on the subject." (*Letter, 25th of November, 1802.*)

Now as no such memorial exists, so far as our inquiries (and they have been carefully made) extend, and as this very

project of a government for the Union was among those suggested by Mr. Morris to Paine in 1782, (not 1783,) after a consultation with Gouverneur Morris and Chancellor Livingston, it is surely not unfair, or even uncharitable, to infer, that the muddled recollection and exuberant vanity of Paine led to this strange misstatement.

From this time forth, Paine was little else than a pressing supplicant for alms at the hands of the different States and of Congress, — a thriftless beggar, exaggerating the services he had rendered, and wearying his ancient friends by his ceaseless importunities. It is not easy to read with tolerable seriousness his odd exaggeration of his merits. In his memorial to the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, he says, with admirable solemnity, “I cannot but observe, that the course of four years has produced no other signature universally known and read, here and abroad, except that under which I have constantly published; and should my situation be rendered such as shall oblige me to discontinue the part I have hitherto acted, it will not be easy to establish a new signature that shall collect and keep the sentiments of the country together, should any future emergency arise, which to me appears very probable.”

These appeals were not made in vain. In 1785, Congress voted him three thousand dollars, Pennsylvania gave five hundred pounds currency, or about thirteen hundred dollars, and New York bestowed on him the confiscated estate of Mr. Deveaux, at New Rochelle. Virginia, to whom Paine also applied, for some reason not precisely ascertained, either insensibility to his vaunted merits, or irritation at a publication made by Paine in 1780 against her claim to the Western Territory, rejected his prayer for relief. Complaint of Washington’s ingratitude and insensibility to his public services was, as we have seen, the favorite topic of Paine’s latter days. There was no word of querulous acrimony too strong for his use. Yet in his hour of need, Washington aided him by private benefactions, and had been a kind and earnest interceder in his behalf; and the private letter which, in 1784, he wrote to Mr. Madison is the most valuable testimonial of praise that Paine ever earned.

“Can nothing,” he wrote, “be done in our assembly for poor Paine? Must the merits and service of ‘Common Sense’ con-

tinue to glide down the stream of time unrewarded by this country? His writings certainly had a powerful effect upon the public mind; ought they not, then, to meet an adequate return? He is poor, he is chagrined, and almost, if not altogether, in despair of relief. New York, not the least distressed, nor best able State in the Union, has done something for him. His views are moderate,—a decent independency is, I believe, all he aims at. Ought he to be disappointed in this?”

It was this generous benefactor, that Paine subsequently described as “one of so icy and death-like a constitution, that he never loved a friend, nor hated an enemy.”

In April, 1787, having collected his wages from all who were willing to pay him, Paine sailed for France, and in September he returned to his native country, after an absence of thirteen years. We have neither the means nor the inclination to trace minutely his career abroad. We cannot do it without involving ourselves in the perplexities of British politics, at a period when partisan heat was at an extreme point, and taking sides in controversies, the merits of which we might easily mistake. The alternations of feeling in Great Britain, produced by the French Revolution, and reflected in a modified form on this side of the Atlantic, are curious subjects for consideration, but too important and too curious to be incidentally noticed. Hope, horror, disgust, and dismay succeeded in as quick succession as the palpitations of the British heart. We felt all but the last,—our distance securing us from alarm,—and, in its place, there were the sympathy of a common republicanism, and the grateful recollection of recent succour. In England, the first excitement was intense; so much so, that he who doubted the result of the great popular movement in France was regarded as a fanatic admirer of obdurate despotism. Nor was this unnatural, or confined to what are known as the lower classes. An English conservative of 1787 had no personal sympathy with the French monarchy and aristocracy, for no classes of men ever were more alien from each other than the British noble and the French courtier of the vilest of all courts,—that of Louis the Fifteenth. If, as Mr. Windham said, Revolutionary France was a large brothel,—the court of Versailles was a small one. The penalties of the Decalogue were inverted, and, in the royal family at least, the penalty of the second commandment followed a violation of the seventh.

It was literally the children, and the children's children, of adultery, that were punished, and Louis the Sixteenth and his wretched son expiated the gross iniquities of a court of strumpets. The British aristocracy looked down on their fellow nobles across the channel as scornfully as a British jack-tar regards a French *matelot*. When the Princesse De Lamballe dined with the Duke of Queensberry, Walpole, a thorough aristocrat, though a Whig, turned up his nose at her. "I have no particular *penchant* for sterling princes and princesses, much less for French plate." To others, the appearance of a rightful claim for redress, which marked the first movements in France, was to a certain extent attractive. The whole class of disaffected persons had a more direct inducement to sympathy. As soon, however, as the violence of the movement increased, there began to be counter currents, and, after no great lapse of time, the whole surface was lashed into a foam and fearful agitation by the outbreak of contending feelings and opinions. Then came the war of words and almost of deeds, in and out of Parliament, — the rupture of ancient friendships, the generous, but mistaken sympathy of Mr. Fox and his party with a people striving to be free, the eloquent frenzy of Burke, surpassingly wise in his enthusiasm; then was developed, in its full severity and rigor, the ministerial policy directed by Mr. Pitt and his crown lawyers, — the manifestos on both sides, — clubs and associations, Crown and Anchor festivities, — loyal and seditious toasts, — pamphlets upon pamphlets. In the midst of this hurly burly, Paine came back to England, and what propitious elements were there for him! What a change for the poor staymaker, to return and be made the companion of leading politicians, to be appealed to as authority, to have listeners at his shrine, and to be able to tell how *he* had started the ball in America, how *he* had done this and that, — in short, how *he* had done every thing. Of course, it was not long before he began to write, and in rapid succession a batch of revolutionary pamphlets were published, which were intended to outshine the feeble brilliancy of "Common Sense." Mr. Burke's great "Reflections" had just appeared, and had awakened every impulse of English loyalty throughout the land. His genius had fired a beacon, whose light made clear as noon-day, to the minds of those for whom he wrote, the atrocities of France and the

dangers of England. And England was in danger ; her institutions, her church, her laws, her ancient privileges, were threatened. The covenant of blood was against them all. It was with no impotent malignity that the demon of Jacobinism brandished its bloody knife across the channel. The only union which revolutionary Frenchmen knew, was in hatred of England and English institutions. " They have turned over in the air," said Mr. Windham, in his speech on the Peace of Amiens, " as in sport, like tumbler pigeons ; but have they ever in consequence ceased their flight ? The ship has been in mutiny ; there has been fighting at the waist, and fighting on the fore-castle ; but, in the midst of the confusion, somebody has always been found to tend the helm, and to trim the sails ; the vessel has held her course." Fortunate, thrice fortunate, was it then for England, that, in dangers like these, a trumpet tongue, speaking words of credible prophecy, like Burke's, should have been heard ! The government, harsh and extreme as its measures were, was thus thoroughly sustained by the sentiment of the people. As a reply to Burke's " Reflections," was written Paine's " Rights of Man " !

And though the reader of the present day may smile at the contrast, it is idle to deny that Paine made an impression in Great Britain. There is abundant evidence that he did. His grotesque and often vigorous phrases told on the excited mind of the populace. The pamphlets were published cheaply, and forced by a thousand arts into every channel of circulation ; they were read in the streets of London, and at Strawberry Hill * ; in palaces and in gin-shops, by old and young, rich and poor. The Attorney-general, in his speech on Paine's trial, stated that children's sweetmeats were wrapped up in pages of the " Rights of Man," and delivered to them, in the hope that they too would read. Paine, also, had a reputation as a writer, which his adversaries themselves had endorsed, and it was one of the cleverest thrusts of Mr. Erskine, in his defence, when he cited Mr. Burke's letter to the sheriffs of Bristol, testifying to Paine's ability and reputation, and to the orthodoxy of some of the doctrines of " Common Sense." But the impression produced was still more plainly shown in the

* See Horace Walpole's *Letters*, Vol. VI. p. 416.

extreme course pursued by the government. He was tried, as is well known, in his absence, on an information laid by the Attorney-general, and, a verdict being rendered against him, proceedings of outlawry were instituted and carried into effect. His head was, in the language of the law, henceforward *caput lupinum*, the head of the noxious animal, to be broken by any dutiful subject that might meet him. In September, 1792, the Department of Calais elected him a member of the National Convention, and Paine hastened to take his seat in that terrible council-chamber, leaving behind him the dangers of a state prosecution. On the 8th of December of the same year, his trial took place at Guildhall, before Lord Kenyon.

Whilst the judgment of the British law was pronouncing, Paine was, in the full fruition of his doctrines, a judge on the trial of royalty. He must have arrived in Paris about the time of the September massacres, and was enthusiastically welcomed. He voted for the abolition of royalty and the trial of the King. And by what right, might any one in his simplicity inquire, did this stranger, who had never, as a citizen, breathed the air or lived under the laws of France, an English runaway, and an outlaw, sit thus in judgment? What a caricature of justice was it to intrust such functions to such hands! Far be it from us to deny that there may be occasions when a monarch, as well as a subject, may forfeit his life. The king may be a traitor, and deserve, as richly as the most vulgar conspirator, a traitor's doom. We think, whatever our sympathies may be, that Charles the First deserved his fate. He had played the bold game of a war with his people, and had lost. Not so Louis the Sixteenth. He had been a close prisoner in the power of his subjects; he had raised no hand against them; had counselled no treason against the constitution of the nation. He had yielded one prerogative after another, and most readily that of self-defence. When Barrère haughtily exclaimed, "Louis Capet be seated," "Louis Capet withdraw," we can imagine him as he was, a helpless, deserted man, powerless and defenceless. He had tried to escape, — as who would not, — but there was no worse treason in this than in the secret, fervent prayers which, from the dungeon in the Temple, he and his family breathed for rescue. His was vicarious crime. His brothers and family were with

the enemy, and therefore he perished. The "haggard element of fear" was at work against him. The Mountain feared his vengeance, if he was allowed to live for a restoration. The Girondists feared the Mountain, and dreaded the penalties which their ferocious rivals would be sure to visit upon mercy.

Charles the First had a trial before the only peers that can try a faithless monarch, his own offended countrymen. The French convention was a mob on a small scale. Englishmen sat as jurors, to try the English king. The French inquest was a sort of *tales*, not even *de circumstantibus*, not of the body of the country. Judges were summoned from abroad, like Paine, Anacharsis Clootz, and others, and made citizens for the nonce and by wholesale naturalization, if not citizens by mere force of republican sympathies.

On the test vote in the Convention, Paine's voice was for mercy, and what he calls his speech in favor of banishment to the United States is preserved in his printed works. What a dismal scene was that of the night session of the 15th of January, 1792, and what thoughts must have crowded into the mind of Paine, as, with the fresh recollections of the past, he looked around him! It was in the same Paris, whither he had first come some eleven years before, to invoke sympathy for America, and where he had been so warmly welcomed. Before him, during the days of the trial, sat the monarch who generously supplied the aid America had solicited, now attainted and about to be sacrificed. Where was the brilliant court which Laurens had importuned, — where the white flag which had floated before the intrenchments of Yorktown, — where Lafayette, the Lamottes, Chastelleux, Rochambeau, D'Estaing, De Grasse? All gone to death or banishment; the scene was changed; there were new actors and a bloody ceremonial. Seven hundred and forty-nine judges were uttering the words of doom on innocence. During all one night and the following day the polling of this dread jury continued. There was to be heard the hoarse, emphatic tones of the Jacobin, remorselessly pronouncing his bloody opinion, — the hesitating whisper of the Girondist, taking eternal woe upon his soul for a false judgment, — the "*sans phrase*" of Paine's friend and fellow constitution-monger, — the doubting vote of banishment from Paine's lips, followed by execrations and sneers from

those who had imported him for sterner uses, — and, last and worst of all, the hollow voice of an apostate prince, decreeing death to one whose blood was kindred to his own ; — all these in quick succession were the incidents of that night and day ; — and yet Paine lived through it, and meditated on it afterwards without remorse, or without any thought but that this was the rightful effect of theories that were destined to triumph ; and, though he shrunk from being himself the butcher, he could in his old age look back upon the bloody actors in these scenes, and praise them as the wise and good.*

Paine was soon to taste of the poisoned cup of revolutionary excess, and his subsequent career affords a curious comment on his usurped functions of a *citizen* judge. He was, as we have stated, naturalized, or, in M. Thiers' phrase, "elected a citizen," on his arrival in France, and qualified by this process to take his seat in the Convention. He was then made one of the philosophic triumvirate with Sieyès and Condorcet, to prepare the plan of a constitution. Anacharsis Cloutz and himself were the only two transmuted foreigners in the Convention. On the fall of the Gironde, in order probably to get rid of them, a decree was passed expelling all who were not natives of France. The next day, by a natural transition, they found their way to the cells of the Luxembourg. The next step was to a revolutionary distinction to which Paine did not aspire, and, in his reasonable terror at the thought of death, he applied to Gouverneur Morris to obtain his release as an American citizen. But, with the honors of French citizenship, he had assumed its responsibilities, and the Minister of Justice very peremptorily replied to this effect to Mr. Morris's intercession. In vain did Paine argue in favor of indefeasible allegiance ; in vain did he assert, that, having once become an American citizen, he could not be renounced as such ; the logic was too subtle for Robespierre and Fouquier Tinville, and could not unlock the prison doors. Beside, if allegiance were thus inalienable, England had a sort of preëmption right in him ; for within her realm he had been born, and thither he had once volun-

* "Hérault de Séchelles, — a good patriot and a friend of Mr. Jefferson." See *Paine's Third Letter to the People of the United States*, printed in the "Aurora," of December 3d, 1802. Who Hérault was we need not say.

tarily returned. For eleven months, throughout the whole Reign of Terror, did he remain a prisoner in the Luxembourg.

How he escaped the wholesale, indiscriminate slaughter of that awful period has never been precisely ascertained. Mr. Morris attributes it to the contempt into which he had sunk, and Paine accounts for it by the mistake made by the gaoler in marking the cells of the condemned ; a mistake which could scarcely have occurred, unless the gaoler was as drunk as the prisoner generally was. Hérault de Séchelles, Anacharsis Clootz, and Lebon of Arras, his immediate companions in captivity, went, one after another, to the guillotine. One hundred and sixty in one day and night were taken from the Luxembourg, and condemned ; yet the destroying angel passed by him. He escaped till the revolution of the 9th Thermidor, and the fall of Robespierre, when the prisons were opened, and Paine, with a few other survivors, worn out with disease and distress of mind and body, was set at liberty.

But what were the fruits of his captivity, the meditations he had had in his solitary cell, and how did he manifest his gratitude for the almost miraculous interposition of a merciful Providence in his behalf ? Immediately on his release, or as soon after as he could digest and put on paper the thoughts and speculations that had been germinating in his mind, he published the second part of his “*Age of Reason*,” the first part of which had been published after his arrival in France and immediately before his incarceration. Finding himself in danger of arrest, and surmising how quick might be the transition from the prison to the scaffold, he hastened to complete his work, so that, in case of his death, it might be left as his last and most precious legacy. It was dated in the Luxembourg, in January, old style, 1794 (8th Pluviose). The second part is dated October, 1795.

This volume, the hornbook of vulgar infidelity, is now before us, and we have doubted how far we ought to refer to it, or what use to make of it. It has passed utterly out of the world’s thoughts, and we have a repugnance, not easily to be overcome, in bringing it to light again. Its blasphemies are enough to sicken the heart ; but still it may not be useless, in one view, to show the Christian reader to what dregs infidelity, beginning with refinement and high-bred speculation, will at last come. With this view, and at the risk

of shocking our readers, let us quote a few extracts from this forgotten, but atrocious volume. It is dedicated to "the citizens of the United States of America, by their affectionate friend and fellow-citizen, Thomas Paine." *

"The Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the Ancient Mythologies, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue, and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud." — *Age of Reason*. Part I. p. 7.

"The Proverbs, which are said to be Solomon's, though most probably a collection, (because they discover a knowledge of life which his situation excluded him from knowing,) are an instructive table of ethics. They are inferior in keenness to the proverbs of the Spaniards, and not wiser than those of the American Franklin." — p. 18.

"If the taste of a Quaker could have been consulted at the creation, what a silent and drab-colored creation it would have been! Not a flower would have blossomed its gayeties, nor a bird been permitted to sing." — p. 55.

"The most extraordinary of all the things called miracles, related in the New Testament, is that of the Devil flying away with Jesus Christ, and carrying him to the top of a high mountain, and to the top of the highest pinnacle of the temple, and showing him and promising him all the kingdoms of the world. How happened it, that he did not discover America? Or is it only with kingdoms that his sooty highness has any interest?" — p. 72.

But our heart fails us, and though we had marked other and more impious passages than these for extracts, we can no further pollute our pages with such ribald blasphemy. Yet the man who could thus write — and the extracts we have made are as nothing in comparison with the obscenities that might be culled from his infamous pages — was invited by Mr. Jefferson to return to America, in a national vessel, and at the nation's expense. Nay more, this very volume — we blush as Christians and as Americans to record it — was written and published, so said Paine, when its writer was under the immediate protection of the Representative of this country near the French Republic. Some of Paine's biographers state, that Mr. Monroe took him from prison and made him

* No part of the Revolutionary jargon has survived, with the exception of "citizen," in which there was once so much pride, and even that has no abiding place, that we are aware of, but in *Hayti*.

the inmate of his house.* The "Age of Reason" was published just before Mr. Monroe was recalled by General Washington, for entering into too close a union with Paine's friends, the surviving Jacobins. Such favor was, after all, but a practical enforcement of Mr. Jefferson's peculiar toleration. "It does me no injury for my neighbour to say, there are twenty Gods, or one God. It neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg."

"I have now," says Paine, in closing what he considers the greatest effort of his genius, "I have now gone through the Bible, as a man would go through a wood with an axe on his shoulder to fell trees. Here they lie, and the Priests, if they can, may replant them. They may perhaps stick them in the ground, but they will never make them grow." — p. 85.

And what impression, after all this impious boasting, has this, or any other, effort of the skeptic or scoffer made upon the mind of man? We speak not of individuals, for some, no doubt, have been by such writings seduced into infidelity as obdurate as his. The venerable trees, beneath whose eternal foliage thousands and tens of thousands have taken shelter in all ages of the world, survive and flourish in defiance of him who would attempt to hew them down. The principle of religious belief is, at this moment, more actively prevalent than it has ever been since the birth of our Saviour; it pervades larger masses, is effecting greater results, and an Age of Reason has become, we humbly trust, an Age of Faith. And who can tell how much of this great result is to be attributed to that dismal scene in which Paine was an actor, or what precisely has been the effect of the reaction on the mind of man? The wars of the French Revolution, which continued till the battle of Waterloo, have been succeeded by a longer peace than the Christian world has ever known. It was amidst the clash of arms, that the worst and most indecent infidelity proclaimed itself. It is in the midst of a peaceful world and age, that the religious sentiment has undergone its most remarkable and signal development. The cycle of

* In the latter part of his life, Mr. Monroe affirmed in conversation, that he received Paine at this time into his house only from motives of charity, having found him wandering about, in a state of utter destitution, in the streets of Paris. Paine remained there for some time, though his habits were so offensive, that Mr. Monroe was obliged to place him in a separate apartment on the ground floor.

infidelity was complete with Paine. He was the last of a class, the first of whom were men of education, accomplishment, and intellectual training, courtiers, and statesmen, and scholars, and princes. Such men were Shaftesbury, and Bolingbroke, and Hume, and the Encyclopedists, and Frederic the Great. The last was a kennel scoffer, who, in his writings and his life, showed the fruits of those pestilent and ambitious speculations, which, spurning the restraints which an humble faith imposes, either soar aloft to fall at last the lower, or crawl with venomous malignity on the ground, and perish there. So will it ever be.

It is difficult to believe that Paine's book could do much mischief. Yet we can see how it may. Its very audacity is imposing, and there are those who walk abroad utterly unarmed, whom it may wound. Of the extent of its circulation we have no means of judging. We are not aware of its being reprinted in this country, though we presume it has been, — the only copy we have been able to find being one of those originally printed in Paris, "in the second year of the Republic one and indivisible." And even this copy we had as much difficulty in procuring as Paine had in obtaining a Bible in Paris.* It was reprinted and, we presume, extensively circulated among a certain class of readers in Great Britain; and again the penalties of a state prosecution were fulminated against him, or rather against his printer. But on this occasion, the prosecution had higher motives and sanctions than before. It was no *ex officio* information, instituted by a Crown lawyer, at the bidding of his master, but an indictment duly found by a grand jury, and prosecuted by the eminent man, specially retained for the occasion, who had so eloquently defended Paine for publishing "The Rights of Man." We need not say, that we refer to Mr. Erskine.

It was Mr. Erskine who, on the former occasion, when the Attorney-General cited with approbation Mr. Adams's "Publicola," said, "Let others do like 'Publicola,' answer the book, not prosecute the author." To the "Age of Reason" there appeared a noble and able adversary, one

* "Under these disadvantages I began the first part of the 'Age of Reason.' I had, besides, neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both, *nor could I procure any*; notwithstanding which, I have produced a book that no Bible believer, though writing at his ease and with a library of Church-Books about him, can refute." — (*Preface to the Second Part of the Age of Reason.*)

who, twenty years before, had been engaged in a kindred controversy with Gibbon. Dr. Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, published his celebrated "Apology for the Bible" as an answer to Paine. This little work, with all its merit, has passed very much out of view. It was intended as a popular appeal in behalf of Revelation, and has no pretensions to any very profound or elaborate views of the subject. It is singularly kind and courteous in its tone, and is in strange contrast with the ferocious ribaldry to which it was meant to be the antidote. The book had an unfortunate title, of which we never think without recalling the remark made on it by George the Third, who, by the by, hated the Bishop for his speech on the Regency Bill. "An Apology for the Bible!" said the King, "what does he mean by that? I never knew the Bible needed an apology." Justin Martyr and Tertullian, to be sure, had written "Apologies"; and Milton had published an "Apology" among his polemical writings; but so had Colley Cibber, and George Anne Bellamy, and perhaps the King was more familiar with these last than with either the Fathers or the poets. Bishop Watson's book was written for the people, not for the palace, and had a great and salutary effect. If it is forgotten now, it is because no one fears the poison as an antidote for which it was prepared.*

On his discharge from prison, Paine remained at Paris, an impotent spectator of the shifting scenes before him, employed, in addition to his infidel lucubrations, with writing occasional pamphlets on French politics. Once he made a sort of amateur speech in the Convention on the constitution of Boissy d'Anglas, but no one listened to, or cared for him. Mr. Monroe succeeded Gouverneur Morris, and threw himself, in violation of the spirit of his instructions,

* In Gouverneur Morris's Diary, in 1795, is an interesting anecdote, given on the authority of Bishop Watson. "He spent a day and night with the Bishop of Llandaff at Colgarth Park near Ambleside. The Bishop told him, among other things, that 'the day the Marquis of Rockingham kissed hands on being appointed minister, he showed him, on the back of a letter, certain conditions he had made with the King and taken down with a pencil. The first was, that the Independence of America should be acknowledged. The Marquis took that precaution, because on a former occasion the King had deceived him. And his Majesty was so hurt by the precaution, that he never forgave the Marquis.' The Bishop, moreover, declared, respecting himself, that he was a staunch opposition man, and a firm, decided Whig."³³ — (Sparks's *Life of Morris*, Vol. I. p. 428.)

into close communion with France. Paine, who was preparing an elaborate libel on Washington, was delighted at the course taken by the minister, which he had sagacity enough to know must cause great dissatisfaction and embarrassment to the President, whom he hated. Paine's letter to Washington, written in Paris, in 1796, and sent home as fit fuel for the flame of partisan malignity, was perhaps the most wanton and atrocious libel he ever penned. The object of his malice soared too high to be reached by such shafts. It is now utterly forgotten.

Mr. Monroe was soon recalled, to be succeeded by General Pinckney, and Paine was again left in friendless solitude. His active career was now rapidly drawing to a close ; one more restless movement, and he will be at rest. Let us trace it to the end.

In 1796, Paine's letter to General Washington was published in the United States, and of its temper a fair judgment may be formed from a single passage taken almost at random, like our extracts from the "Age of Reason."

"As to you," (speaking to Washington,) "treacherous in private friendship, and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an impostor or a villain ; whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any."

This, it will be remembered, was published with the author's name both in Europe and America. So was the "Age of Reason." And yet Mr. Jefferson, who, as well as his friends, thought the letter to Mazzei needed explanation and apology, considered it proper and expedient, before Washington was cold in his grave, formally to invite his confessed calumniator back to this country, and to tender him, at the nation's expense, the means of return. The surmise is neither unreasonable nor uncharitable, that Paine's writings in France, after Mr. Monroe's recall, were far from unpalatable either to the French Government or to a party at home. Nor is it known how far they may have contributed — his friendly relations to the leaders of the opposition to Washington's administration being well known — to produce the state of irritation which, beginning with the insolent refusal of the Directory to receive General Pinckney, continued throughout Mr. Adams's presidency, and almost involved the two nations in actual war.

For a long time Paine was anxious to return to America, without being able to effect it. To return in a private vessel exposed him not only to the cost of his passage homeward, but to the risk of capture and punishment as a fugitive from justice in England. Paine had too fresh a recollection of the Luxembourg to make him at all desirous of a residence in Newgate; and similar, if not worse, he knew, would be his fate, if the blockading squadron off the French ports chanced to exercise a war right of search. He did not dare to expect either General Washington or Mr. Adams to protect such a contraband article as he was, or to commit the indecency of making our public ships convey him. But, in 1802, when Washington was dead, and Mr. Jefferson was President, the opportunity of a safe and cheap return presented itself. The *Maryland*, sloop of war, carrying Mr. Dawson, a member of Congress from Virginia, as bearer of despatches to France, was offered to Paine, and he gladly accepted the proposal.

"I hope you will find us," says Mr. Jefferson, addressing the writer of the "Age of Reason," and the libels on Washington,— "I hope you will find us returned generally to sentiments worthy of former times. In these it will be your glory to have steadily labored, and with as much effect as any man living. *That you may long live to continue your useful labors, and to reap their reward in the thankfulness of nations, is my sincere prayer.* Accept assurances of my high esteem and affectionate attachment.

"T. JEFFERSON."*

Paine landed in October, 1802, and immediately hastened to present himself to the President. It is believed that his reception was far from being as cordial as he anticipated, which may be well accounted for by the repulsive nature of his personal habits, and the rudeness and offensiveness of his deportment to all about him. After contributing largely for a few weeks to the columns of the Administration newspapers, sometimes writing, however, in so revolting a strain on the subject of religion, that the conductors of the press, not the most fastidious, were compelled to mutilate his contributions; after writing, at Mr. Jefferson's request, a demonstrative defence of the gun-boat-system, the absurdity of which even

* Jefferson's *Works*, Vol. III. p. 459.

Professor Tucker admits, Paine at last took refuge on his farm near New Rochelle, where, with the exception of occasional visits to the city of New York, and with no other occupation than corresponding with a few scattered infidels there and elsewhere, he lingered in entire obscurity till his death, on the 8th of June, 1809, at the age of seventy-two.

Of his personal habits, his private career, and the circumstances of his dying hours, of the questions about his true relations to the female who followed him from France, and of whom he afterwards tried to rid himself as an incumbrance, we do not care to speak. On his trial for the "Rights of Man," in 1791, it was proved, by competent and credible testimony, that he was, if not habitually, at least occasionally, a drunkard. There was nothing in his subsequent career, or in his personal appearance, as those who remember him can testify, to discredit this testimony. Alternately at his farm near New Rochelle, scribbling infidel essays, or lounging in the streets of New York, with no other companions than the few who agreed with him in sentiment, and who shrunk not from his loathsome exterior, he continued to the last a fair specimen of that class of men who are stirred to the surface by political excitement, and sink into contemptuous oblivion when the waves are lulled to rest. "Remember me," he says, in a letter written about that time, "to my much respected friend, Carver, and tell him I am sure we shall succeed if we hold on. We have already silenced the clamor of the *priests*. They act now as if they would say, 'Let us alone, and we will let you alone.' Come, ride up and see me. I am master of an empty house, or nearly so. I have six chairs and a table, a straw bed, a feather bed, and a bag of straw, a tea-kettle, an iron pot, an iron frying-pan, a gridiron, cups, saucers, plates and dishes, knives and forks, two candlesticks and a pair of snuff-boxes. I have nothing else, but to this you and Carver, if he will come, are welcome." Thirty years after Paine's death, William Carver, the only friend who seemed to cling to him, died in New York, eighty-five years of age, a squalid mendicant in the streets, too obdurate or too enthusiastic in his persevering skepticism, to ask alms from Christian charity, and unable, so vain are the promises of infidel philanthropy, to find any other refuge open to receive and succour him.

Of Paine's deathbed we do not care to speak. There is no well authenticated account of what then occurred ; and, if there were, in our poor judgment, it would prove nothing. The struggles of bodily disease were never meant to authorize any inference as to the state of mind, the confidence or despair, of the dying man. The condemned captive, who, in full health and in solitude, looks forward to approaching and inevitable death, has a right to claim credit for sincerity, be his opinions what they may ; but the flickering light that is shed on the ghastly and attenuated visage of disease is generally too uncertain to be relied on. All experience shows, that the unbeliever may die calmly and resolutely, and that the truest Christian may shrink back with terror. If the Christian's faith be true, these terrors, if they do not degenerate into despair,—for then it becomes unbelief,—are no sin ; and, in our confidence in the faith which every one may hope will sustain him in his hour of trial, the spectacle of the dying skeptic who is careless and confident is more awful than that of him who shrinks in agonizing terror at the thought of death. Paine did neither. He was a prey to childish fears, but not apparently to the more reasonable fear of death. He dreaded being left alone, or being left in darkness, and screamed, like a terrified child, for his nurse and the light. He insisted on his nurse reading aloud ; but it was not so much in order to take solace from what she read, as to be satisfied by the sound of her voice that she was at hand. And yet, when questioned by his physician as to his religious opinions, he reaffirmed his infidelity with calmness and decision. “ Do you believe in the Christian religion ? ” asked Dr. Manley ; “ do you believe that its truths and consolations can help you ? Come, now, answer me honestly. I want an answer as from the lips of a dying man, for I verily believe you will not live twenty-four hours ! ” After a pause of some minutes, he answered, “ I have no wish to believe on the subject.” And these were the last words he is known to have uttered.

We have not left ourselves room to say a word of Cobbett's pilgrimage to New Rochelle, some ten years after Paine's death, of the disinterment of the mouldering bones, and their translation to Great Britain. It was a piece of indecent and ineffectual mockery. The spectacle aroused no sympathy, excited no interest. The bones of the scoffer

were looked on by such of the British people as knew any thing about them, with no more regard than the anatomical student bestows on the unknown carcass before him. Where they lie now no one knows, or cares. And thus ends the story of one who was endowed with abilities that might have made an impression on the world, and have left a memorable trace behind him ; an actor in scenes of commanding interest ; a sagacious observer of what was going on around him ; a speculator in no common spirit on the times in which his lot was cast ; a patriot, in a certain, though a narrow sense ; but, withal, infirm of the only high purpose which consecrates man's career on earth, and poor in the aspirations which alone dignify humanity, — the aspiration for a reward which the world neither gives nor takes away, the mingling of the highest of human qualities, the love of virtue and of truth, with a meek and humble sense of the powers with which God has endowed us, and the love of freedom with a decent reverence for authority and example, which constitute the perfection of human character, that of the conservative and Christian patriot.

ART. II. — 1. *Speech delivered in the Senate of the United States, Jan. 24, 1839, on the Bill to Abolish the Duty on Salt.* By JOHN DAVIS. National Intelligencer of March 25, 1839.

2. *Reports of the Majority and Minority of the Select Committee on the Origin and Character of Fishing Bounties and Allowances.* Read in the Senate of the United States, April 10, 1840. Washington : Blair & Rives, Printers. 1840. pp. 80.

THERE is no error, we think, in stating that no work devoted to the rise and progress of the American Fisheries exists. It will not be wide of the truth to add, that few works would be more useful to the young, and to our countrymen generally. The idea is prevalent, that fishing is a low occupation ; but it is as false as it is common. Equally prevalent and false is the supposition, that these fisheries have